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ABSTRACT

This interdisciplinary unit is designed as an introduction to West African culture for both teachers and students who have little background about Africa. The unit provides basic concepts and a conceptual framework for learning more about West Africa. The unit is divided into four sections with 18 lessons. Several lessons are in each section. Sections include: (1) "Creating Communities"; (2) "Geography, History and Community"; (3) "How an African Community Works"; and (4) "African Arts in the Community." A concluding activity offers evaluation strategies for the unit. Appendices add a description of slides, recommended resources, and sources of books and materials on Africa. (EH)

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ED 422 258

Building Community West African Style

An Intérdisciplinary Teaching Unit

SO 029 167.

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by Teachers, Humanities Scholars, and African Immigrants
from The ATLAS Project
Arkansas International Center

Building Community West African Style

an interdisciplinary unit exploring African culture and our own culture

for Junior High or Middle School
adaptable to high school or elementary school

by
teachers and consultants
of the
ATLAS Project
of the
Arkansas International Center

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Teaching Africa in the Middle School

Basic Content and Expected Outcomes

Building Community: West African Style is designed as an introduction to West African culture for both teachers and students who have little background about Africa. The unit provides both teachers and students with some basic concepts and a conceptual framework for learning more about West Africa. Students who complete this unit will not know much detail about African history or music, but they will have a framework of concepts that will help them make sense of new information about Africa.

A typical person who sees a newspaper article on West Africa reads, "Mr. (unpronounceable word) from the country of (unpronounceable word)"...and skips to the next article. The student who completes this unit is more likely to think, "Oh, this is an article about a country I am familiar with dealing with issues I have heard about, and the person even has a name I recognize."

The following are some of the outcomes that should be achieved from the unit.

1. Students should become familiar enough with African languages and names that they will be able to approximate pronunciations and remember names.

2. Students should appreciate the tremendous diversity of Africa and recognize that it is a large continent made up of many countries and cultures. They should be less willing to generalize about the whole continent from information about one place.

3. Students should recognize the variation of climate and vegetation types and have some understanding of the ecology of the forest, savannah and desert.

4. Students should understand that African history followed similar patterns to history in other parts of the world with a rise and fall of kingdoms and empires and a variety of outside contacts.

5. Students should understand that most African cultures are very family centered with a strong emphasis on morality, responsibility and courtesy. They should not confuse different family structures such as polygamy with infidelity or loose morals.

6. Students should understand and appreciate the quite different aesthetic principles of African arts and the influence that African design, literature, and music have had on international culture.

The unit is designed to take advantage of the adolescent developmental tasks of learning social skills and the rapidly maturing mental capacities of early adolescence. It focuses heavily on the development of relationships in African culture—and gives students many opportunities to develop skills of working together, self-expression and listening to others. It starts with very concrete materials and activities, but leads students step by step to higher level thinking.

Why Teach an Interdisciplinary Unit?

Building Community, West African Style, is designed as an interdisciplinary unit, though the parts can be used separately. The impact of an interdisciplinary unit is much greater than the sum of separate units in each discipline.

School A has made a major effort to improve its teaching about Africa. The district has made a significant commitment and has given a lot of in-service time to develop curriculum and train teachers to teach it. Each discipline has researched and developed lesson plans on

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Africa. A typical seventh-grade student, for example, now studies a two-week unit on African geography in November. They study a short story from Nigeria set in 1880 and several poems from South Africa in January. In art class in the spring they make masks after seeing pictures of masks from Côte d'Ivoire from the early 1900s.

Students come out of the seventh grade with some interesting bits and pieces of information about Africa. Unfortunately, many of them have put the pieces together wrong. A typical student pictures the South African wearing a mask from 2,000 miles away in a ceremony performed 300 years later 1,000 miles in the other direction on scenery 3,000 miles away. An equivalent picture of Europe would have a boy fighting with Napoleon, wearing a Scottish kilt under the Tower of London in the middle of the Swiss Alps.

School B has done the same curriculum reform, but with one addition. The district provided teachers in the seventh grade with a few additional hours to meet together and coordinate their efforts. So in school B, all of the units on Africa are taught the same two weeks and the teachers coordinate their instruction. For example, the social studies teacher shows the location and period of history of the art and literature. Students in school B spend the same amount of time on Africa as students in school A, but they leave the seventh grade with a much more complete and accurate picture of African history and culture because they not only know pieces of information, but they also know how the pieces fit together.

In teaching about Africa, it is particularly important to put learning into context because it is such a large continent, so little is taught about it, and students have so many misconceptions about it. The following are some suggestions of ways that teachers in a variety of different disciplines can coordinate their teaching.

How to Teach an Interdisciplinary Unit

1. Select the teachers who will work together. The first time you are doing an interdisciplinary unit, you should if possible, arrange a full day to meet together to plan the unit. If you repeat the unit the next year, you will not need as much planning time.

2. Decide on the core concepts and learnings that all students should gain from the unit. The lessons in the cultural core unit are recommended for everyone.

3. If your classes are divided by subject, decide which teacher will present which lessons. Compare what students need to know to do the lessons with the skills in each subject that they already have. Require them to do high enough quality work that they will have to learn new skills. For example, if they are writing a play, provide them resources and opportunities to improve their skill at writing dialogue and developing scenes. You may want to teach them skills in advance, or you may let them try a task and then help them inductively figure out how to do the skills.

4. Design a calendar so you can coordinate activities. It is a good idea to plan toward a final event in which students will have an opportunity to present performances for their peers and perhaps their parents. You may want to have an assembly program or an in-school field trip in which students are dismissed from school as if they were going on a field trip, but instead met for a day's focus on Africa. An African festival makes another interesting culminating activity. As students complete the activities and products of the unit, they should develop plans for presenting them at the festival or the final assembly.

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5. Decide on a way of assessing student learning. In Lesson Two are several suggestions for development of an interdisciplinary portfolio and a performance assessment. Decide which, if any, of these you will use together and what responsibilities each teacher will have for helping students keep their portfolio.

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African Languages Pronunciation Suggestions

Many teachers hesitate to teach about Africa for fear of mispronouncing names. You might as well face this problem with your students from the start. You WILL mispronounce words. Every language has its own sounds, accents and rhythms, and it is almost impossible to pronounce another language correctly without hearing it from a native speaker. Even then it is still difficult to pronounce it correctly because
other languages often have sounds we have not learned to make. A large number of languages are spoken in West Africa, each with its own pronunciation rules, so even if you learn to pronounce Yoruba words correctly, you will not be able to pronounce Akan. The following explanation by Dr. Alex Darkwah of Arkansas Tech University describes some of the main features of pronunciation of African languages and gives a simple pronunciation guide.

Pronunciation of African Words
By Dr. Alex Darkwah

Most languages in the world are linguistically known as tonal languages. In Africa alone, there are more than 1,000 of such languages. A tonal language is a language in which the same sounds in a word mean different things when pronounced in a different tone. For example, the Twi word "nsa" could mean: " a hand," "do not dance," "liquor," or "do not fetch" with reference to liquids depending on the tone used.

The tonal nature of the languages makes the pronunciation of vowel sounds very important in the pronunciation of African words. All vowels in a word are distinctly pronounced, for example "viatu" (shoes), "Ndovu" (elephant), "pikipiki" (motorcycle) in Swahili; "akwaaba" (welcome) in Twi, or "Waton loko che yenzu?" (What time is it?) in Hausa are pronounced as they are written. The only difficulty in the pronunciation of such words is the tone in which they are sounded. Consonants are not silent either, but vowels are seen as important because their pronunciation affects meaning.

As a general vowel pronunciation guide for the English speaker:

- "i" is generally pronounced as a short mid-vowel as in English examples "is," "bit," "injury," "consist" or "assist."
- "e" is pronounced also as a mid-vowel as in English examples "Kate," "mate" and "reign."
- "a" is pronounced as a low back vowel as in "car," "father" or "mama."
- "u" is pronounced as a high back vowel as in "who," "do" or "too."
- "o" is pronounced as in "go," boat," "toe" or "so."

In addition to these vowels, there is a low frontal vowel written as "ɛ" which is pronounced as in "bet" or "wet."

Also there is the "ɔ," written like an inverted "e" which is pronounced as in "bought," "sought" or "dawn."

Another area of difficulty in the pronunciation of African words is the unusual consonant blends such as "dz," "ts," "nd," "ny," "mk," "ml" and "ng." The usual guide for learning is to pronounce each consonant separately.

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Part 1
Creating Communities

This section provides suggestions for organizing the unit, designing unit projects, and getting students to start thinking about concepts of community in their own lives and in Africa.

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1. Build an African Community in Your School

contribution by Mary Carter

Subject: English and social studies

Overview:

Students will explore the concepts of global and multicultural communities and the need for people of different cultures to learn to work together. They will recognize the role of Africa in the world community and the importance of understanding African culture.

Objectives:

1. To recognize that one of the universal needs of human beings is to build communities that are able to work together.
2. To recognize their own need to learn to build effective multicultural communities.
3. To recognize that each culture organizes communities differently, and that understanding the way a community is organized is a good way of understanding a culture.
4. To recognize the barriers that have hindered understanding of African culture.
5. To interest students in understanding African culture.

Materials and Preparations Needed:

Select the activities and handouts from this lesson that you think will motivate and prepare your students to study about Africa.

Activities:

Activity 1: Who's in Your Community?

1. Hand out the quiz on "Who's in Your Community?" and ask students to guess at the answers or use the questions in a quiz-bowl format. Encourage students to guess at answer. Then share the answers and have students discuss.

Answer Key: 1. Nigeria, Ethiopia, Zaire and the United States; 2. 50% of the workforce will be non-European or of hispanic origin; 3. According to current archeological theories, humans originated in Africa, so all of us are of African ancestry; 4. The continent of Africa is 3.3 times larger than the U.S.; and 5. 54 (Note, this number may vary according to whether island nations and disputed territories are included.).

2. Discuss with students what the information on this quiz tells them about the kind of people they will need to work with if they want to be successful in the future. Almost all predictions of the future suggest that there will be more and more interaction between people of other countries and the United States and people of other countries, and that the United States itself will become more of a mixture of other cultures. Ask students to brainstorm the advantages and the problems of a more interconnected world.

3. If you have a class of one race ask them to imagine they were working in a business 1/4 Afro, 1/4 Hispanic, 1/4 Anglo and 1/4 Asian. How would they feel? How would they react

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if they were offered a job in a country where they were the only person of their race and language? Would they accept the job? What skills would they need to be successful?

Activity 2: Insiders and Outsiders

1. Ask students to imagine that an exchange student from Nigeria in West Africa were coming to their school next year.

2. Divide the class into groups of four or five students. Give them ten minutes to plan a skit. The skits will present a new student from Africa moving to town. Assign half of the groups to show the new person coming to class and everyone making them feel welcome. Assign the other half to show the new person coming to class and everyone making them feel like outsiders.

3. Make two columns on the board. Label one "feel like an outsider" and the other "feel like part of the group." Discuss each skit after it is presented and write on the board ways that were shown either to make a person feel like part of the group or ways that were shown to make a person feel like an outsider.

4. Ask students to discuss why communities might exclude a new person. Is it hard to include a person from a different culture in a group? What are the advantages that someone who is different can bring?

Activity 3: Building Community

Put the following two definitions of the word "Community" on the board. Ask students to compare the differences in the meanings of the two definitions.

a. A group of people living in the same place under the same government.

b. A group of people united by shared interests, religion and nationality or culture.

Discuss whether or not your school or classroom is a community. Do people in your school share interests and culture? Discuss things that are done at your schools to build a sense of community.

Explain that we need to learn how to build communities with all different kinds of people, so it is important to understand how other cultures build their communities.

Explain that in this unit, students will study the ways that African communities are organized and how they build a spirit and sense of belonging and loyalty. Point out that most African cultures build a strong sense of community loyalty and belonging. Many Africans see this as one of the biggest differences between their culture and American culture. Point out that one of the best ways to understand another culture is to look at the way they build communities. In the study of Africa, we will be looking at the ways Africans organize their communities—and at the things we can learn for our own communities.

Point out that students can also explore the possibility of using some of these methods to build a sense of community in their own class and school.

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Handout 1-1
Who's In Your Community?

1. Name the four nations in the world with the largest black populations.

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. What percentage of the U.S. work force is expected to be of non-European ancestry by the year 2056? _____

3. According to current archaeological and genetic research, what percentage of the world's population is made up of emmigrants from Africa? _____

4. The continent of Africa is _____ times larger than the U.S.?

5. How many countries are in Africa? _____

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2. My African Community

contributions by Mary Carter, Bettina Fletcher, and Rebecca Reagan,
Ben Hobgood and John Baker

Subjects:

English and social studies (other subjects optional)

Overview:

Students will explore the pictures now in their minds of African communities and will begin a major interdisciplinary project which will incorporate their learning from the unit.

Objectives:

1. To assess the knowledge students have of Africa at the beginning of the unit.
2. To learn how to use a portfolio to see their progress in learning.
3. To select a project for the unit which will lead to a performance.

Materials and Preparations Needed:

Handouts 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-6
Country Notes and Maps

Activities:

Activity 1: What Do You Know About West Africa?

1. Tell students that you want to begin by trying to find out what they already know about West Africa. Urge them to do as well as possible on the activity, but point out that they will save this assignment to see how much more they know by the end of the unit.

2. Ask students to imagine that their parents were going to be assigned to West Africa for a year and that they were going with them. Give students a few minutes to share how they would feel about such a large move. Do they think that Africans would be more or less welcoming than they showed in their skits of an African coming to America in the first lesson?

3. Assign each student a specific African country or community. If students will be working in groups, assign each group a country with individuals focusing on different communities in it. The list shows communities for which information is available in this unit. Make sure that you have a mixture of rural and urban communities.

4. Give students Handout 2-1 and have students try to guess what their community would be like? You may want to have students work together in groups by country on this assignment.

Activity 2: Planning a Portfolio to Demonstrate Your Learning

1. A portfolio or a notebook is a good way to help students keep track of what they are learning in a variety of different classes and in different ways. If you are giving students a lot of handouts, you will probably want to help them organize them in a notebook. One or more sections of the notebook can be set aside for a portfolio in which the students keep their own evolving work and reflect on what they are learning.

2. Start the portfolio with the "Predictions" handout. Each day, have students go back to

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this handout and write a.paragraph demonstrating what they have added to their knowledge or misinformation they have corrected. Occasionally, have them reflect on how their image of Africa is changing , what kinds of activities are most helping them learn, and what else they want to achieve in knowledge of Africa.

3. Hand out a table of contents for the portfolio (2-1) and briefly go over the items which students are to include. Emphasize that the portfolio should be as attractive as possible because it is to represent the student's best work.

Using Novels for Cultural Information

There are a number of excellent West African novelists. Their works can not only be studied as literature (see the lesson on literature), but they can also be used as a source of information on history, culture, art, everyday life. In fact, the novels listed below are one of the richest readily available sources of such information. A novel provides a detailed look inside a culture and inside the minds of people of that culture that is almost impossible to get in any other way except to travel there. You may want to coordinate the reading of a novel with this unit. You can either have all students read the same novel, or have different groups or classes read different novels and compare them.

These books were all originally written for adults. If parents in your community are concerned about content and language in books you use, you might want to have a parent committee help you select books.

Selecting a Novel

Ibo, Nigeria (forest setting about 1900)

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe is a rich book, full of details about the Ibo culture of Nigeria. However, it is set 100 years ago and describes very disturbing customs such as head-hunting and human sacrifice. It is a tragedy in which the main character, who is admirable in many ways, brings about his own destruction. Things Fall Apart is a valuable book to read. However, it should not be students' only image of Africa, just as Macbeth should not be their only image of Scotland.

Mandinka, Guinea (savanna and urban setting about 1940)

The Dark Child by Camara Laye would probably be the best choice for most students. It is an autobiography of a young man growing up in the 1920's at the peak of the colonial period in Guinea. It describes Laye's life in the city, in the countryside and in an European school, giving a well-balanced picture of the life of a young person during that period. It is easy to read and interesting.

Fulani, Nigeria (savanna and desert setting about 1930)

Burning Grass by Cyprian Ekwensi is an adventure story about a Fulani family in northern Nigeria. It is more comparable in length and difficulty to junior novels. It is an adventure and romance novel.

Major Project to Demonstrate Learning

1. Assign students to prepare a major project to demonstrate their learning about their community. Most middle school children learn most effectively if they can apply their learning in a hands-on way. However, it is very important with such projects to have clear content

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criteria as well as artistic criteria. For example, if students do a diaorama of a village, it should clearly show the correct climate, vegetation, animals, clothing styles, housing styles and occupations for the region it represents.

2. When the African consultants on this unit were asked how to present information, they suggested using drama, as that is a common teaching technique in West Africa. The historical drama project has been particularly successful with middle school students. Two student plays are included in the unit. Having students dramatize what they see in their minds is a good way of picking up misunderstandings. For example, in one class, a student had Africans captured as slaves buy a rowboat when they arrived in America and row back home. Another student had a captured slave carrying on a conversation with the Portuguese captain, unaware that they would not have spoken the same language.

3. A handout on developing a drama and two sample student plays are included. The English teacher will probably want to provide some additional instruction on writing dialogue.

The following are some other project possibilities.

a. A mural either of different geographical regions or of a historical timeline.

b. A diorama of the community.

c. A trade fair booth selling the products of their community.

e. A series of letters home describing your community. Use the same categories as in the first assignment for the different letters.

4. Reflection on the project and assessment are the most important dimensions. It is important to develop an atmosphere in which these kinds of questions can be raised without ridicule or threat as students develop their projects. You might ask questions such as, "Is there anything that doesn't fit the climate region? How could you make the climate more vivid?"

5. Give students a clear understanding of how they will be assessed on their project. You may want to have the class help generate a list of criteria. Handout 2-2 suggests some criteria you might want to consider.

Suggested Communities for Projects (information is available in this unit)

Nigeria

- Lagos
- Abeokuta (Yoruba culture)
- Enugu (Igbo culture)

Ghana

- Accra
- Kumasi

Cote d'Ivoire

- Abijan
- Korhoga

Using the Research Tools Provided With This Unit

This unit includes several research tools. The Data Sheets and country maps are from the United States Department of State Background Notes. You can order your own set of the country notes from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

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The research and project assignments in this unit encourage students not only to examine the statistical data, but to make inferences about the impact of this information on the lives of the people in their community.

Give students the data sheets for the community they will be studying and go over them, interpreting vocabulary they may not know and helping them see how they can make inferences. Go down the sheet comparing the data there with their own community. As they look at the data sheets, have them refer to the map for geographical locations. Explain terms students do not understand and help them to make inferences. Here are some sample questions from the Ghana data sheet.

1. How would your life be different if you lived in a country the size of Illinois and Indiana?
2. How does the population of cities in your state compare with population of Ghana's major cities? How would your life be different in a city of a different size?
3. What would you expect Ghana to look like and feel like based on the terrain, climate and rainfall figures? How would your life be different in that climate?
4. How would your life be different if there were four major language groups?
5. Literacy rate means the percent of people who can read and write. How would life be different if only 30% of adults could read and write, and school was over at the 9th grade?
6. Infant mortality rate means the number of children who die as babies. Have students figure out how many in a class of 25 would have died as babies.
7. Gross development product is the amount of goods produced. Per capita GDP is a rough estimate of the amount of money available per person. Note, however, that in an agricultural society, this does not include the food and crafts people produce for themselves or that they trade in a market or among friends. For example, Ghana's GDP of $350 indicates that most people have little cash for buying things in stores, but they may have a quite comfortable life and plenty of food if they make everything they need themselves.

After you go over the data sheets, have students compare their "predictions" with the information they find on the data sheets and write a paragraph summarizing the new information they have learned from the data sheets.

Slides

There is a set of slides accompanying this unit. The descriptions of the slides are in the Appendix.

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Handout 2-1
Predictions

Imagine that you are planning to live in the community of _____.
Imagine that you are standing in the center of the community. (There will be no penalty for guessing or wrong answers on this assignment.)

1. What will the land look like? What kind of plants do you think will be growing?

2. What will people be living in? What will houses be made out of?

3. What will the people look like? What will they wear?

4. What will people do for a living?

5. What will people do for recreation?

6. Do you think people will be friendly? How do you expect them to treat you?

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Handout 2-2
Suggested Portfolio Contents

A portfolio is a way for you to organize and reflect on your own learning and demonstrate to others what you have learned. You will want to keep it neat and well-organized and design an attractive cover.

Part I: What You Knew at the Beginning of the Unit

Include the predictions that you do at the beginning of the unit to show what you knew when you started the unit. If your teacher gives you a factual pre-test, include it here.

Part II: A Daily Record of Your Learning

Each day you should record the main ideas that you learn from the unit. Your teacher may tell you how to record them, or you may choose whether to use a list, a paragraph, a drawing, or a mind-map. You will also want to keep any handouts or study sheets in your portfolio.

Part III: Your Choice of Your Best Daily Assignments

You will frequently have short writing assignments during the unit. Select the best of these for your teacher to grade. You may want to revise them, correct grammar and rewrite or type them.

Part IV: Your Unit Project

Include both your final project and the research you did leading up to it.

Part V: What You Learned from the Unit

Include your final test or revisions of your predictions activity.

Part VI: Reflections on What You Have Learned

Describe what and how you have learned.

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Handout 2-3
Ethnic Groups of West Africa

The Igbo (also spelled Ibo) live in the forest regions in Eastern Nigeria along the Niger Delta. They were originally farmers who lived in small villages. In the past century the Igbo have incorporated aspects of Western culture into their own lifestyles, including Western education, and today are found in the professions and government throughout Nigeria. Many Igbo still live in the villages and the growing urban areas in southeastern Nigeria where they are farmers, plumbers, carpenters, teachers, lawyers, and others.

The Yoruba live in the forest region of southwestern Nigeria. They have been an urban society with large cities and kings for many centuries. Their religious and artistic traditions can still be found in many parts of the Americas. Today, Lagos, one of the largest cities of Africa, is a mixture of Yoruba and many other ethnic groups.

The name Akan refers to a language group which includes Twi, Fante, Akuapem and others. It is the most widely spoken indigenous group of languages in Ghana and extends to Cote d'Ivoire. The ten million people who speak these languages are called Akans. Historically, many of these people were a part of the Asante kingdom.

The Manding are a group of West African ethnic groups. They may be known as Mandingo, Malinke or Mandinka. Other Manding people include the Bambara and the Dyula or Jula. There are over ten million Manding in Sierra Leone, Mali, Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, and Ghana.
They live in the sahel region and formed important empires during the middle ages.

The Fulani were originally herdsmen who lived on the savanna in northern Nigeria. They are predominantly Muslim and in the nineteenth century played an important role in spreading Islam and in developing kingdoms based on Islamic principles.

Note: There are many other ethnic groups in these countries. These are the groups that are mentioned in this text.

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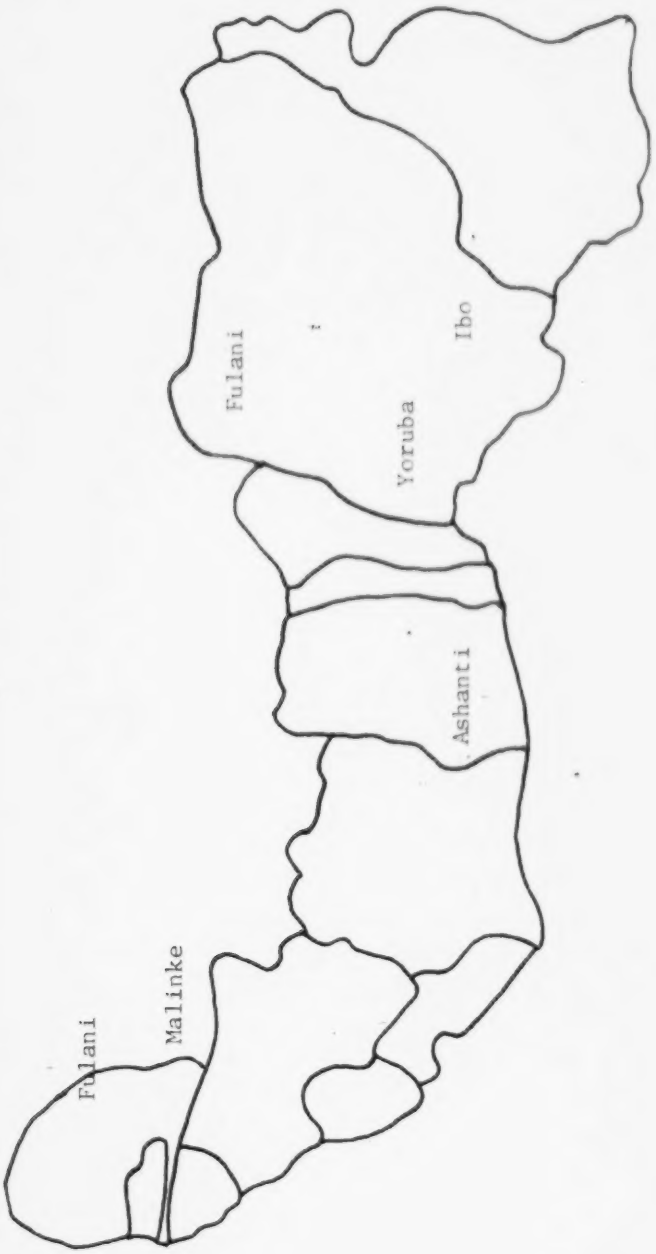
Handout 2-4
Ethnic Map of West Africa



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Handout 2-5
Writing a Report and A Drama

1. Select a community and a specific period of history or event. You may choose the present.

2. Research the community.

a. Compile all of the information that you get about the community from all of your classes. You may get bits and pieces from a number of classes. For example, in art, you may see sculpture from your community. In social studies, you may find out about the climate. Use the the questions from your "Predictions" handout to help organize your information. Look for answers to the questions on your "predictions" sheet.

b. Your teacher will give you data sheets about your country. As you look at the data sheets, think about the way this information would affect an ordinary person's life.

c. Do additional research from sources in your library.

3. Write a report (or present an oral report) on your community during that time period including detailed answers to the questions on your "predictions" handout and any other information you think is particularly interesting.

4. Write a play showing what life is like in your community.

a. Create a stage setting to show the environment or the housing. You can draw a backdrop on a piece of butcher paper and tape it to the blackboard.

b. Develop a plot from a real historical incident, dramatize one of the examples given in this unit or use your imagination to create a story based on a problem or issue you study.

c. Use the information in the unit to create characters. Be accurate in selecting names, describing family relationships, and their behavior.

d. Use information from your art and music classes to create costumes or musical accompaniment.

5. Look at the sample student plays as examples. Critique the plays. Use some of the following questions or make up your own.

a. How well researched is the play? Is the geography accurate for the country or community? Are the names correct for the ethnic group? Are the historical events correct? Do the people use accurate customs for their area?

b. How would you grade the play as an English assignment? Is the language correct--or does it reflect the dialect the people spoke? Does the dialogue sound like real speech? Does the action move well?

c. Was the author able to put himself in the shoes of the people he is writing about? Do the people seem real? Do you feel the emotions they would have felt?

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Handout 2-6a
The Passing of the Griot

Student Play by Ben Hobgood,
8th grade, Dunbar International Magnet School, Little Rock, Arkansas

Background Information

A Griot is a traveling storyteller. They live in Western and Central Africa. Being the Griot is a family job. The Griot's main job is telling the history of an area.

Griots tell stories in many ways. Some Griots dance, sing, play musical instruments such as flutes or drums, and some act the story out.

When I went to Africa with my family in 1985, I saw a Griot. They are very fun to watch. Griots are truly the History Teachers of Africa.

Setting

A small village in Southeastern Cameroon, on the Ngoko River. The village's name is Elak Oku. Surrounding the village is the thick African rain forest.

Characters

The Griot Mbonga
The Griot's Son Nkema
The Village Chief Nfala
A Village Person Named Bokonga

The Passing of the Griot

Scene 1

Mbonga walks in to Nafala's hut.

Nfala: Mbonga, how nice it is to see you.

Mbonga: *(In a frail voice.)* And you too my friend.

Nfala: Does something trouble you?

Mbonga: Yes, I believe my son's time has come.

Nfala: Are you saying that you are going to step down as the Griot?

Mbonga: Yes, I... *(He is interrupted by Nfala.)*

Nfala: But you are the best Griot we have ever had.

Mbonga: My son will be better than I.

Nfala: But you are the greatest, you're the only Griot anybody in this area has ever known.

Mbonga: *(Frailly.)* But I am too old to continue; it is hard for a ninety-seven year old man to travel through the thick forest to tell stories.

Nfala: I see. Does your son Nkema know?

Mbonga: No, he doesn't, but he is ready to become the Griot. *(Bokonga walks in eating a mango.)*

Bokanga: What is the matter Nfala?

Nfala: You must not tell this to anyone.

Bokonga: What?

Mbonga: I have decided to step down.

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Handout 2-6b

Bokonga: *(In an extremely loud voice.)* What!!
Nfala: Be quiet.
(Nkema heard and is walking toward the hut.)
Nkema: What is the problem?
Mbonga: Nothing, I was just telling Bokonga a joke.
Nkema: Oh, well then I'll be going on, I have to use the restroom. *(Nkema walks out.)*
Bokonga: I must be going too; I have a family to feed.
(Bokonga walks out.)
Nfala: How are you going to tell the people?
Mbonga: I plan on telling it in a story.
Nfala: When?
Mbonga: Tomorrow night at sundown.
Nfala: Many people will be there, I will see to that.
Mbonga: *(Walking out.)* Good-bye my friend.

Scene 2

The next night when the sun is going down a large crowd has gathered in the village square, but Mbonga has not shown.

Nfala: *(To Bokonga.)* Where is Mbonga? Have you seen him?
Bokonga: No, I haven't, not since yesterday when he was talking to us.
(Suddenly Nfala sees Mbonga walking out of the rain forest.)
Nfala: *(Pointing at Mbonga.)* It is Mbonga.
(Mbonga walks to the center and sits down with his drum in front of him and starts beating on it. All eyes are upon him as he starts to sing.)
Mbonga: *(Stops singing and says.)* This is the story of all the Griots.
(Two hours later Mbonga has told the story of all the Griots before him and is now telling about himself.)
Mbonga: I have told many stories and passed on many traditions, I have lived a very fruitful life. Now it is time for my son to carry on the tradition as Griot.
(The crowd gasps; they have only known one Griot, and many people start crying for Mbonga's son, Nkema, steps forward and takes several ceremonial objects from his father.)
Mbonga: *(Walking away.)* I may meet you again sometime my friends. Goodbye.
(Mbonga walks off into the forest and is never seen again.)

THE END

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Handout 2-6c
My Life Must Count

Student-written historical fiction play by John Batson, 8th Grade
Dunbar International Magnet Junior High School, Little Rock, Arkansas

Characters: Abdulai Conteh
Abdulai's mother
Abdulai's father
Mrs. Musa (a teacher)
Student #1
Student #2
Narrator

Setting:

The stage is set with a short table spread with a piece of cloth. There are three bowls made of pottery on the table. The bowls contain rice. The dress of the characters is colorful but not expensive. Characters are around the table.

Scene 1

Narrator: In a small village in the highlands of a country of West Africa. Abdulai Conteh, a 14 year old boy, is going through one of the most difficult times of his life. He is defying his father, whom he loves dearly, for the first time.

(Abdulai, his father and his mother are seated at the table for the evening meal. All have been silent. Tension fills the air.)

Abdulai: *(Speaking loudly.)* Mother, it is not fair! I have lived here in our village of Manfarou for fourteen years. I have helped plant the rice, the corn, the potatoes. I have been a diligent and loving son. Now I have the chance to become something greater than I ever imagined. There was a visitor at our school who told us of great chances possible in the city of Conakry. I want to go!

Abdulai's Mother: Son, your father has always planned for you to take over our farm. Our families have been farmers here for hundreds of years. Father has great plans for you.

Abdulai: That's just my point. Our houses have always been made of mud bricks with straw roofs-so they must forever be made of mud bricks and straw roofs. Mother, I want more!!!

(Mother holds her face and shakes her head. Father now looks up with a scowl on his face.)

Father: Abdulai, I will hear no more of this nonsense you have been saying. You are needed here. Who will tend the goats, or herd the sheep if you go to the big city? There are many dangers awaiting a stranger in the city. The teachings of the Koran are often forgotten in such a huge place. I will hear no more of this!

(Father leaves the room. Abdulai looks at his mother in an appealing way. She simply turns slowly toward the task of cleaning the table.)

Abdulai: Mother, I am going to Conakry. I love my family very much, but my life must count for something besides a herder of sheep.

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Handout 2-6d

(Abdulai hugs his mother and leaves the stage. Father returns to talk to Mother.)

Father: I do not understand Abdulai. He knows he will get all of this farm for his children one day.

Mother: But this isn't enough. He has heard that there is more than this farm. He knows of far away places and big cities that he has never seen. His world must be larger than these highlands.

Father: He is only fourteen. How can he take care of himself away from home?

Mother: Mrs. Fanta, his teacher, has told me that Abdulai is very smart. She has told me that there is a teacher-training college in Conakry called the Julius Neyerere Normal School. She can arrange room and board and tuition for Abdulai.

Father: I think it is a big mistake. Not everyone needs to know all of the book stuff that Abdulai seeks. He should simply learn the running of the farm.

Mother: Abdulai is restless. Our teachings from the Koran tell us that each of us is different. We must let his life become what he desires.

(Light fade--)

SCENE 2

Narrator: *(Standing apart)* Abdulai began his search for life's answers in Conakry. He had never seen such wonderful sights. He finished teacher training and simply became more hungry for information. He explored his world and began to work for others. Thirty years have passed since we last saw Abdulai.

(The scene opens with Abdulai, now with flecks of gray hair, standing in front of a small classroom. Students are listening intently.)

Abdulai: My world became hundreds of times larger when I learned to read. My ability to help my father with his farm increased when I received instruction from agricultural technicians. Think about it! Only about 10% of our people can read and write. We must be the ones who make the reforms in education that our people need.

(The students applaud. Then another adult who has been standing in the corner begins to ask questions. This is Mrs. Musa, the teacher.)

Mrs. Musa: Tell me, President Conteh, how did you ever overcome the obstacles of your background to become President of our fine country?

Abdulai: *(Now president of the country.)* Mrs. Musa, students, I am here today to tell you that the only thing that can really defeat you is the fear of trying. I had a loving, understanding mother who understood my need to make my life count for something. My father, once he saw my dedication, helped me all he could. There are no things beyond our reach if we are willing to work for them!

(The group applauds and President Abdulai Conteh leaves the stage.)

Student 1: How old was President Conteh when he was elected?

Mrs. Musa: He was the youngest President ever elected at the age of 39.

Student 2: Why do the people of our country love him so much?

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Handout 2-6e

Mrs. Musa: Everyone knows President Conteh is a good man. He has worked hard to improve the lives of all of our people. He has tried to be a holy man following the teachings of the Koran. Everyone knows his life has counted for something very special.

Student 1: Why does he come to visit us?

Mrs. Musa: President Conteh told me that his life was changed by a visitor to his school. He believes that each of you must know that your world is large and wonderful; you may choose to make your life count for something great.

Narrator: *(Standing apart.)* Abdulah Conteh, now President Conteh, saw more in life than staying in the same mud hut with the same straw roof. He did not choose to do what his family had done for hundreds of years. After the struggles and trials, Abdulai was successful. His family was very proud of him. He led his country wisely.

Notes on evaluation of plays:

Use these plays as models for students to practice critiquing work. English teachers can discuss with students the development of plot and character and the use of dialogue. Encourage students to praise what they consider well-done and to suggest improvements.

Social studies teachers can have students compare the information in the plays with the information on the country sheets.

Several scholars who are experts on Africa read these two plays. They generally found them quite well done, but made the following comments.

a. It is not common for griots to step down, but the story is a well-written description of a griot.

b. In the play about Abdulah Conteh, the author originally used the last name of a real president and used the name of the country. The professor pointed out that the real president with that name was quite different from the character in the play and suggested a completely fictional name. The student also had the family sitting on the floor. The scholar pointed out that a table and chairs would be more accurate for modern times.

c. Another professor pointed out that Africans have the same generation gap as Americans. An older African--and an older American--might think that the life of a poor farmer counted as much as that of a modern city person or even a President.

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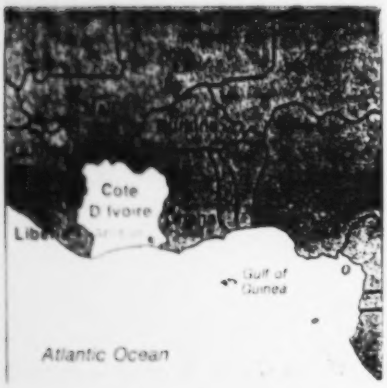

COTE D'IVOIRE

GEOGRAPHY

Cote d'Ivoire (or Ivory Coast) is located on the south side of the West African bulge. Its 550-kilometer (340- mi.) coastline on the Gulf of Guinea has heavy surf and no natural harbors. A series of coastal lagoons fringes the southeast. The nation's capital was legally changed to Yamoussoukro in 1983, although the seat of government remains in Abidjan.

Abidjan is the commercial and population center of the country and also is the terminus of the 1,150-kilometer (716-mi.) railway thatconnects Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso, with the Gulf of Guinea.

In the western half of the country, dense forest extends to the sea; scrub savanna covers a narrow strip stretching from Fresco to the Ghana frontier. A lush tropical forest extends inland to a line about halfway between Dimbokro and Bouake; significant cash crops--coffee, cocoa, tropical woods, and bananas--are grown there. North of the forest lies an inland savanna zone of sandy soils, wherevegetation is sparse and the landscape unbroken. Cotton is a key cash crop grown here. The southern part of Cote d'Ivoire falls into the tropical zone, with hot, humid weather and heavy rains. Daily temperatures vary from a minimum of 22 C (72 F)to a maximum of 32 C (91 F), and the heaviest rains generally fall between mid-April and mid-July, with a shorter rainy season in October and November. As one moves north from the coast, the weather gets drier and the climate grows more savanna-like. Temperature differences become more extreme, with nighttime temperatures in January dipping as low as 12 C (54 F) and daytime temperatures in the summer rising to above 40 C (well into the hundreds).

PEOPLE

Cote d'Ivoire's more than 60 ethnic groups usually are classified into seven principal divisions-Akan, Krou, Lagoon, Nuclear Mande, Peripheral Mande, Senoufo, and Lobi. The Baoule, in the Akan division, is probably the largest single subgroup, with perhaps 20% of the overall population. They live in the central region around Bouake. In 1960, 22% of school-aged children attended classes; in 1981, 76%.

GOVERNMENT

The constitution provides for a strong presidency within the framework of a separation of powers. The executive is personified in the president, elected for a 5-year term by universal adult suffrage.

ECONOMY

Agriculture has been the keystone of Cote d'Ivoire's development into one of Africa's most prosperous economies, with annual real growth of nearly 7% from 1960 to 1980. Cocoa, coffee, and tropical woods were key products and, despite impressive diversification efforts, accounted for 47% of 1988 exports. However, international monetary conditions during the eighties led to recession.

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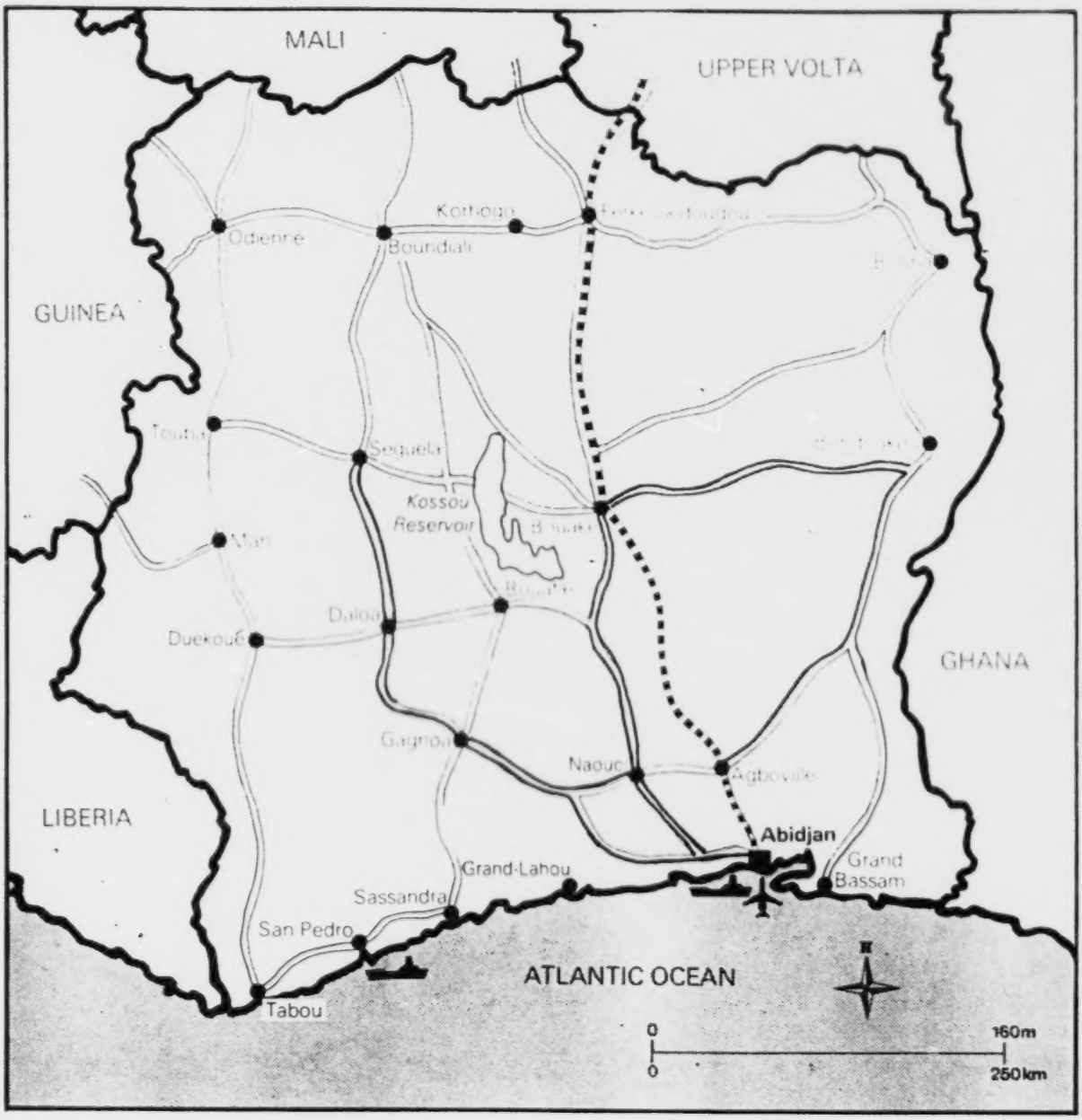
Map of Cote d'Ivoire



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REPUBLIC OF MALI

GEOGRAPHY

Area: 1,240,278 sq. km. (474,764 sq. mi.); about the size of Texas and California
Cities: Capital - Bamako (pop. 880,000), Segou (85,000), Mopti (75,000), Kayes (50,000), Gao (40,000)
Terrain: Savannah and desert.
Climate: Semitropical in the south; arid in the north.

The most productive agricultural area lies along the banks of the Niger River between Bamako and Mopti and extends south to the borders of Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. Average rainfall varies in this region from 50 centimeters per year (20 in.) around Mopti to 140 centimeters (55 in.) in the south near Bougouni. This area is most important for the production of cotton, millet, corn, vegetables, tobacco, and tree crops.

Rice is grown extensively along the banks of the Niger betweenSegou and Mopti. Using water diverted from the Niger, the Office du Niger irrigates about 40,000 hectares of land for rice and sugarcane production.

The Niger River also is an important source of fish, providing food for riverine communities; the surplus—smoked, salted, and dried—is exported. Due to drought and diversion of river water for agriculture, fish production has steadily declined in recent years.

PEOPLE

Population (1994): 9.1 million
Annual growth rate: 2.9%
Ethnic groups: Mande 50%, Fulani 17%, Voltaic 12%, Songhai 6%
Religion: Islam 90%, indigenous 9%
Languages: French (official) and Bambara
Education: Attendance - 21% (primary); 9% (secondary). Literacy - 32%
Health: Infant mortality rate - 110/1,000
Life expectancy - 48 years
Work force: 3.5 mil. (agriculture - 75%; services - 13%; industry and commerce - 12%)

GOVERNMENT

Type: Republic
Independence: September 22, 1960

ECONOMY

GDP (1994): $2.2 billion
Annual growth rate (1988-91): 3%
Per capita income (1994): $300
Annual skilled worker's salary: $1,680
Natural resources: Gold, phosphate, kaolin, salt, and limestone currently mined; deposits of bauxite, iron ore, manganese, lithium, and uranium are known or suspected.
Agriculture: 40% of GDP. Products - millet, sorghum, corn, rice, livestock, sugar, cotton, groundnuts (peanuts), tobacco
Industry: 19% of GDP. Types - food processing, textiles, cigarettes, fish processing, metalworking, light manufacturing, plastics, and beverage bottling.
Trade (1991): Exports - $430 million. Cotton products, animals, fish, tannery products, groundnuts, diamonds, gold. Imports - $513 million. Food, machinery, vehicles, petroleum products, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, textiles.
Major markets: France, Cote d'Ivoire

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Source: US Dept of State Background Notes

Map of Mali

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REPUBLIC OF GHANA

GEOGRAPHY

Area: 238,538 sq. km. (92,100 sq. mi.); about the size of Illinois and Indiana combined
Cities: Capital-Accra (pop. 953,500), Kumasi (399,300), Tema (180,600), Sekondi-Takoradi(116,500)
Terrain: Plains, scrubland, rain forest, savanna
Climate: Tropical

Ghana is located on West Africa's Gulf of Guinea only a few degrees north of the Equator. The 537 kilometer (334 mi.) coastline is mostly a low, sandy shore backed by plains and scrub and intersected by several riversand streams, most of which are navigable only by canoe. A tropical rain forest belt, broken by heavily forested hills and many streams and rivers, extends northward from the shore, near the Cote d'Ivoire frontier. This area, known as the "Ashanti," produces most of the country's cocoa, minerals, and timber. North of this belt the country is covered by low bush, park-like savanna, and grassy plains.

The man-made Volta Lake extends from the Akosombo Dam in southeastern Ghana to the town of Yapei, 520 kilometers (325 mi.). The lake generates electricity, provides inland transportation, and is a potentially valuable resource for irrigation and fishing.

PEOPLE

Population (1994): 16.9 million
Density: 62/sq. km. (160/sq. mi.)
Annual growth rate (1989): 2.9%
Ethnic groups: Akan, Moshi-Dagomba, Ewe, Ga
Religions: Christian 42%, indigenous 38%, Muslim 12%, other 7%
Languages: English, Akan 44%, Mole-Dagbani 16%, Ewe 13%, Ga-Adangbe 8%
Education: Years compulsory - 9; literacy - 30%
Health: Infant mortality rate (1994) 81/1,000; life expectancy - 56 years
Work force: 3.7 million (agriculture and fishing - 54.7%; industry - 18.7%; sales and clerical - 15.2%; other - 11.4%)

GOVERNMENT

Type: Authoritarian
Independence: March 6, 1957

ECONOMY

GDP (1994): $6.2 billion
Per capita GDP (1994): $399
Natural resources: Gold, timber, diamonds, bauxite, manganese, fish, timber
Agriculture: Products-cocoa, coconuts, coffee, food crops, rubber
Industry: Types - mining, lumber, light manufacturing, fishing, aluminum
Trade (1991): Exports - $843 million. Cocoa, aluminum, gold, timber, diamonds. Imports - $1.2 billion. Petroleum, food, industrial raw materials, machinery

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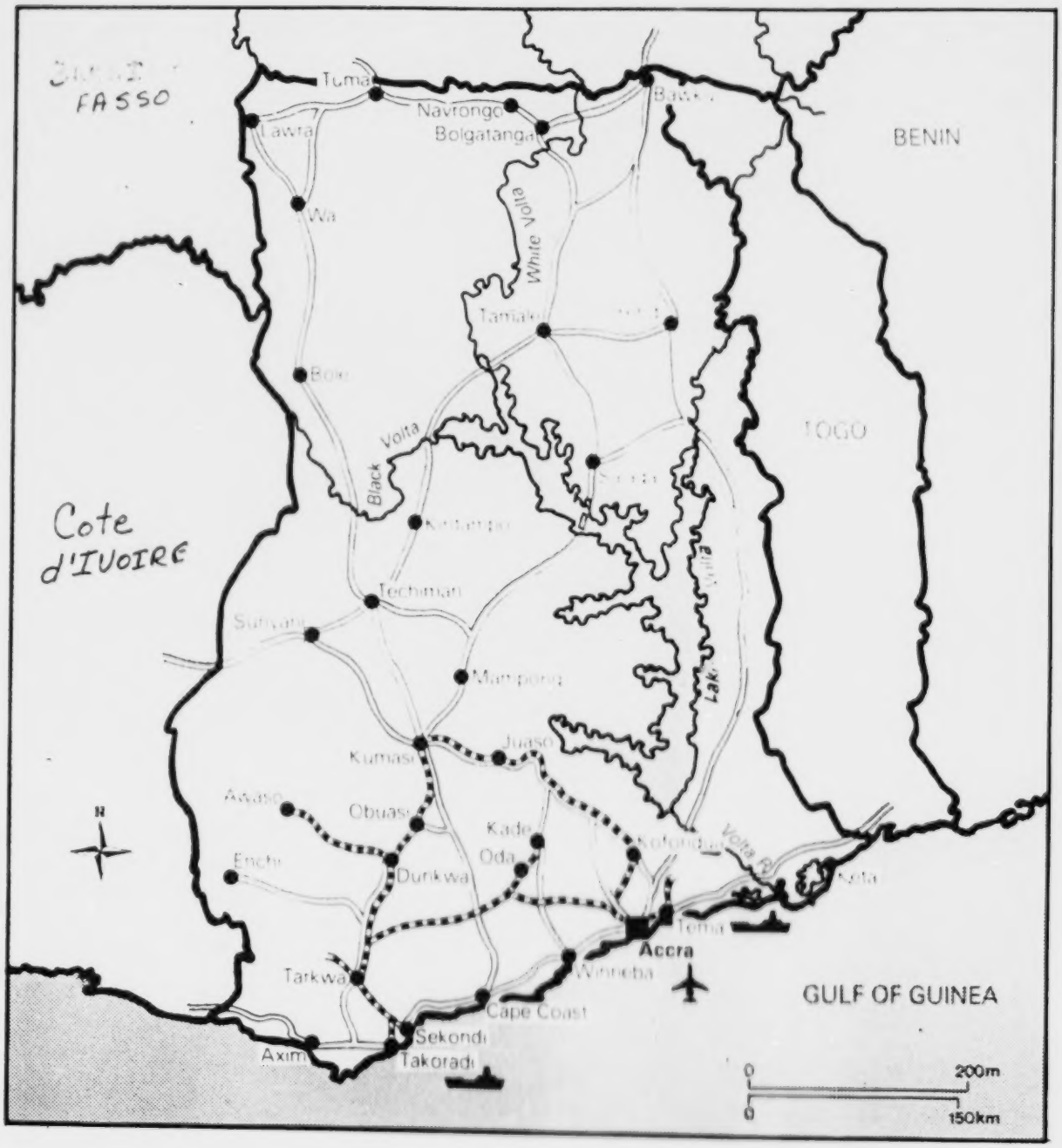
Map of Ghana



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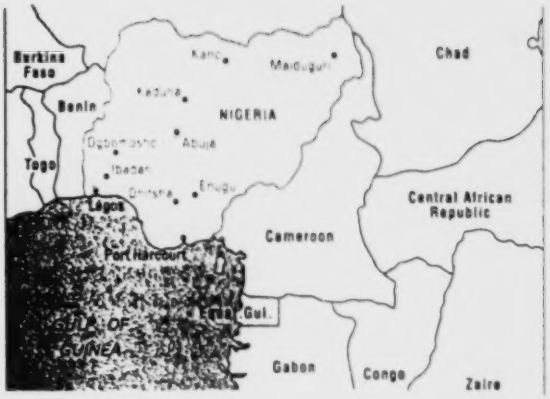

NIGERIA

GEOGRAPHY

Area: 923,768 sq. km. (356,700 sq. mi.,) about the size of California, Nevada, and Arizona
Cities: Lagos (1.2 mil.); Ibadan (4-5 mil.); Kano (1 mil.); Enugu (500,000)
Terrain: Hot, humid coastal belt of mangrove swamps (10-60 miles wide); north of this; tropical rain forest and oil palm bush (50-100 miles wide); relatively dry central plateau of open woodland and savanna covers the greater part of the north; semidesert in the extreme north.
Climate: Two seasons, wet and dry, are well marked through most of Nigeria. The dry season typically includes periods of Harmattan, during which a dense pall of Sahelian dust drifts over sections of the country.

PEOPLE

Population (1994): 98.1 million
Annual growth rate: 3.5%
Ethnic groups: Hausa-Fulani, Ibo and Yoruba. The major ethnic group in the northern two-thirds of the country is the Hausa-Fulani, most of whom are Muslims. The Yoruba people are predominant in the southwest. About half of the Yorubas are Christians and half Muslim. The Ibos (or Igbos), who are largely Catholic, are the largest ethnic group of the southeast. People of different language backgrounds communicate in English.
Religions: Muslim, Christian, indigenous
Languages: English, Hausa, Fulani, Ibo, Yoruba
Education: 42% attendance (primary schools); literacy rate - 51%
Health: Infant mortality rate 110/1,000; life expectancy - 54 years

GOVERNMENT

Type: military with recent attempts to return to an elected government
Independence: Sept. 22, 1960

ECONOMY

GDP (1994): $24 billion
Per capita GDP (1994): $270
Natural resources: Petroleum, tin, columbite, iron ore, coal, limestone
Agriculture: Cocoa, palm oil, yams, cassava, tobacco, peanuts, soybean
Industry: Crude oil, textiles, cement, food products, car assembly
Trade: Major exports - petroleum, cocoa, rubber
Major imports - transport equipment, automotive kits, foodstuffs, machinery

The oil boom of the 1970s shifted Nigeria from an agriculturally based economy to one that relies on oil for more than 95% of export earnings and 70% of federal budget resources. The oil boom caused a massive migration to the cities which had a devastating impact on agriculture.

Since 1982 the country experienced severe economic difficulties because of a dramatic fall in export revenues and heavy debt service payments. Oil prices fell from $40 per barrel to $28.

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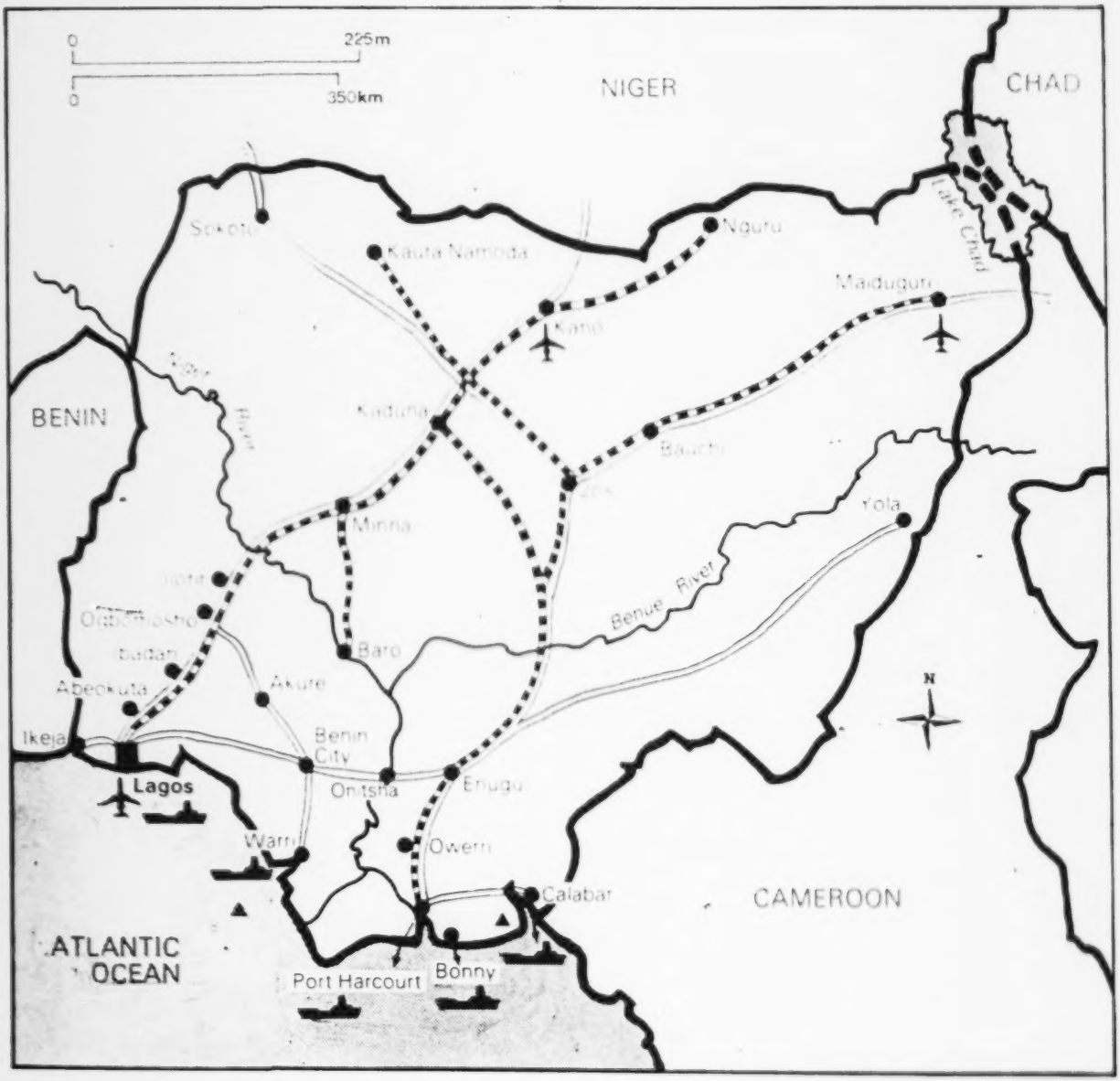
Source: US Department of State Background Notes 29

Map of Nigeria



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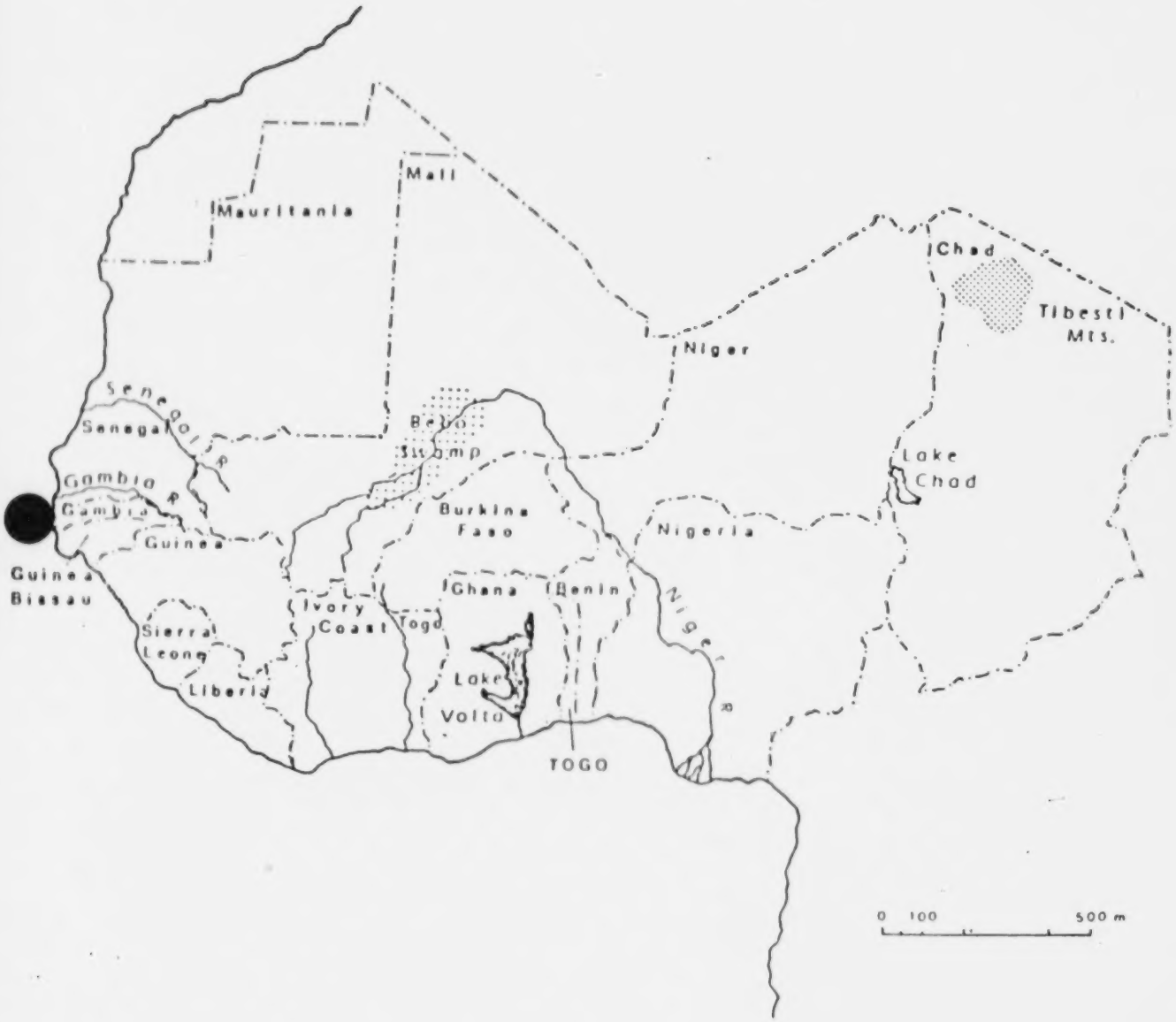
Map of West Africa

by Jerry Hanson



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Part 2
Geography, History and Community

In this section students will explore the relationship between geographical features and historical events and the development of community.

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3. Land and Community

contributions by Lois Thompson, Rebecca Reagan, and Bettina Fletcher

Subject: Geography and social studies

Overview:

Geographical features have a profound impact on a community's lifestyle. In this lesson students will explore the types of geographical regions found in West Africa and the impact of geography on the types of communities developed.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to describe the three main climate regions and related vegetation zones of West African countries.
2. Students will describe the impact of climate on vegetation, the impact of vegetation on animal life, and the impact of all three on human lifestyle choices.
3. Students will recognize some of the major geographical features, cities and countries of West Africa.
4. Students will describe the climate, vegetation, and lifestyles of the community they are researching for their project.

Materials and Preparation Needed:

Handouts 3-1, 3-2, 3-3
Slides numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 18 and 20.
Game pieces for "Where Am I?"
Maps and country data sheets from Lesson 2

Activities:

1. Give students the handout on ecological regions and the maps of vegetation types and agriculture. Help students to compare the information in the text and on the map.
2. Have students locate on the map the community they are studying. Have them add the information to their portfolios using whatever format on which you have decided.
3. Present the slides. Have students locate the slides on the map. Have them compare the descriptions of the climate in the text with what they see in the slides and the information in the commentary on the slides. Have students note the kinds of buildings and the kinds of vegetation in each climate region.
4. Where Am I?

This activity can be done either as a study sheet or as an interactive game to promote group cooperation.

If you decide to use it as a game, make one set of study sheets for each group. Cut the place descriptions and the photographs apart. Have each student take one of the data sheet maps from Lesson 2 and a random selection of descriptions of places. Have the groups match the place descriptions to the correct map.

After students have matched the place descriptions to the maps, go back over each country

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and have students describe key features of the country. You might have students write a paragraph about one of the countries using the information from the game.

Answer Key: 1. Côte d'Ivoire, 2. Nigeria, 3. Nigeria, 4. Côte d'Ivoire, 5. Ghana, 6. Nigeria, 7. Nigeria, 8. Guinea, 9. Ghana, 10. Ghana, 11. Guinea, 12. Côte d'Ivoire, 13. Guinea, 14. Côte d'Ivoire

5. Portfolio Writing Assignment

At the end of the lesson, have students summarize the main ideas about the geography of West Africa and its impact on people's lifestyles that they have gained from this lesson. They should save these in their portfolios.

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Handout 3-1a
Ecological Regions of West Africa

What's a Comfortable Climate?

People like to live in a climate that is comfortable, but humans can live in any climate if they have enough resources. Most animals and plants are not as flexible as people and can only live in certain kinds of climates.

The climate and land forms affect the kinds of plants that grow. The kinds of plants affect the kinds of animals. And all three affect the lifestyles that people choose. However, people can change the animals, plants, and to some extent the climate.

West Africa has three main types of ecological regions. Along the coast of the Gulf of Guinea and stretching inland is a forest of high trees. As one goes north, the trees get smaller and more widely spaced, and eventually are replaced by grasslands or savanna. Finally, the savanna vegetation disappears in the Sahara desert.

In most climate regions in the world, temperature affects the kind of plants that grow, but in West Africa, rainfall is much more important. In West Africa, the temperature may change as much in a single day as it does throughout the year. For example, in Guinea, the temperature may vary from 45 degrees to ninety degrees in a single day. The temperature is also affected by the plants. For example, the temperature of cleared land may be almost ten degrees higher than in nearby forest land. Large trees, by shading the rays of the sun, lower the temperature.

Rainfall in West Africa varies from almost none in the Sahara desert to over 70 inches. In much of West Africa, there are rainy seasons and dry seasons. The dry season may be so dry that many plants cannot survive.

The Forest Regions

The forest regions of West Africa run along the coast and stretch about 200 miles inland. Most of the West African forests are not technically rain forests because they do not receive enough rainfall. Rainforests need approximately 70 inches of rainfall a year with no completely dry season. Most of the West African forest region has at least one dry season.

The forest is very rich in plant life. There may be dozens of species of trees in a small area. Trees in the forest region often grow up to 200 feet high. The forests are layered. The top layer consists of trees with wide crowns. The next layer is of trees about 60-100 feet high. Then there is a third layer of trees about 15-60 feet high which is much denser than the higher trees. Epiphytes such as algae, lichen, ferns and orchids grow on the trees. Below the trees are shrubs and finally a ground layer. Many vines hang from the large trees.

The forest floor is often bare because so little light gets through all of the layers of trees. In most parts of the forest, one can move around quite easily because there is no thick underbrush. It does not look like the dense jungle frequently shown in movies. During the dry season many of the trees lose their leaves.

The forest is dark and still. Little direct sunlight filters through the layers of trees. There is almost no wind, so the humidity is quite high.

Animals in the Forest

Tropical forests have fewer animals than tropical grasslands. Since there is little grass, there are no large grazing animals, and none of the predators that feed on grazing animals. Instead,

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there are animals that eat insects or fruit or nuts such as tapirs, forest buffalo, duikers, okapi, apes and elephants. The elephants and buffalo of the forest are smaller than those of the savana. Animals and birds are more common along rivers where crocodiles and hippos may be found. Squirrels, lemurs, monkeys, chimpanzees, and gorillas live in the trees. Insects and reptiles are very plentiful.

Lifestyles in the Rainforest

People use nuts, fruits and palm products directly from the forests. However, in most areas, farmers cut the trees to grow crops. In traditional farming, some of the larger trees are left because they are too difficult to cut down and because they provide shade. Most of the smaller trees are cut and the area is burned. The ash from the burned trees increases the fertility of the soil. The farmer then plants cassava or cocoyam, but after a few years, the soil loses its fertility. Bananas can be planted on the less fertile land. But eventually the land is abandoned and is allowed to regrow. The new forest will grow back in about 40-50 years. It looks like the original forest, but usually has fewer species. Almost all of the forests in West Africa have been cut at least once. Palm trees may be planted instead of allowing the traditional forest to regrow.

Most farms in the forest region have several crops which reach maturity at different times. Farmers plant cocoa to sell. The cocoa tree takes from five to seven years to mature and bear fruit, but it continues to yield for several years. Swamp rice, peanuts, rubber palms, coffee and oil palms are also grown as cash crops in the forest region. Farmers grow yams, plantains, bananas, cocoyams, cassava, maize, rice, peppers, okra, onions, tomatoes, and various fruits such as oranges and pineapples to eat themselves.

Throughout the forest zone the tsetse fly prevents people from keeping cattle. Most villages, however, have sheep, goats and poultry.

The forest regions, of course, provide plenty of wood for building materials and for making furniture and household implements. Large, elaborately carved homes can be found in some of the forest regions. Wood carving is a major art form for some of the people of this region. Today, a number of large, modern cities can be found where forests once grew.

The Savanna Region

Most of West Africa has rainfall ranging from 50 inches to 10 inches with a tropical continental climate. In this region there is usually a dry season and a rainy season. Temperatures are high.

Plants in the Savanna

Tall grass and trees make up the plants of the savanna region. In the rainy season, it looks like a park with green grass and widely spaced trees. The grasses are tall and include elephant grass which burns easily in the dry season.

Savanna ranges from areas with large trees 50 or 60 feet tall whose branches almost touch to semi-desert region with thorny trees a few feet high and widely spaced.

Rivers are usually lined with trees. In some savanna areas, particularly in Ghana, vegetation is often clumped around termite mounds. Many crops such as millet, guinea corn and yams grow. As the savanna fades into the desert and rainfall goes below 15 inches a year, vegetation changes. Acacia trees sometimes create dense patches. Grasses and bushes become more sparce and succulents become common.

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Handout 3-1c

Animals in the Savanna

Animals may have played a role in extending the savanna. They eat grass and spread the seeds. If elephant and hippo populations grow, they can destroy forests and create grasslands.

The savannah of Africa is famous for its animals, The giraffe eats the tops of thorn trees. The elephant eats the middle of the trees, and the eland and impala eat the bottom leaves. Antelope, gazelles, zebra and wildebeest eat the grasses . Elephants and rhinos live in mixed forest and grassland. Lions and cheetah stalk them in turn.

Today, this scene can only be found in game reserves, and most of the famous game reserves are in South or West Africa. Most West Africans have never seen a zebra or a lion.

The animals you will see are those that are herded by man--cows, sheep, goats, donkeys, horses, and camels.

Human Lifestyles in the Savanna

Some botanists believe that the savanna was once forest which was changed to grassland by humans and fire. Most of Africa's grasslands are the result of man's burning forests or using them for cultivation and animal grazing.

Fire is very important to savanna vegetation. Fires started by hunters to drive out animals or by farmers to clear land reach most parts of the savanna each year. Usually the fires are local and kept under control.

In the savanna there are clear, rainy seasons and dry seasons. During the dry season, trees lose their leaves, and grass turns brown. By the end of the dry season, grasses have usually become fibrous and coarse, so burning them clears the way for fresh, new growth. If the land is not burned over, scrub and thorn trees spread rapidly. When the rainy season comes, new grass grows and may become 6 ft. tall or more.

Farmers in the savanna area grow yams, maize, rice, groundnuts, cassava, tomatoes, shea butter, guinea corn, tobacco, and millet. Agriculture in the savanna can be precarious because rainfall varies from year to year.

Cattle raising is one of the main occupations. Sheep, goats, chickens and guinea fowl are also kept. Cattle manure is often used to fertilize crops.

Housing in the savanna ranges from elaborate buildings of sun-dried bricks to simple, portable homes for people who travel with their cattle.

The Desert

The Sahara desert has a very high temperature during the day and a rainfall of 10 inches a year or less. Sometimes there is no rain for years. When rain does come, it is usually in a storm which runs off without penetrating the soil. Temperatures are extreme. Temperatures can climb as high as 130 degrees F and July temperatures average 95 degrees. In the middle of the night, there can be freezing temperatures in the northern Sahara.

Desert Plants

There are some plants throughout most of the desert, but they are small and widely spaced and adapted to survive with little water. They have deep root systems. Their leaves have an almost waterproof covering. Other plants survive the lack of water by going through a quick life cycle in little more than a week when water is available and producing seeds that can last through a long dry cycle. Permanent vegetation consists of a few trees and shrubs such as jujube and

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takarisk. Immediately after a rainfall a carpet of tiny flowers appears.

Desert Animals

Desert animals are well adapted to their environment. Fat is stored in humps on the camel and in tails on sheep. Some have long legs or furry feet as protection against hot sand. Small animals burrow to escape heat, and then come out at night. Sand termites live below the surface. Amphibia either live in the oasis or avoid sweating by not having sweat glands. Mammals are insulated against the heat by fur.

Human Lifestyles in the Desert

People live wherever there is adequate water from wells. Small groups of people have learned to make a living from the very limited plant and animals resources available in the desert. Trade routes across the Sahara were a major source of livelihood before ship and air trade routes were well developed.

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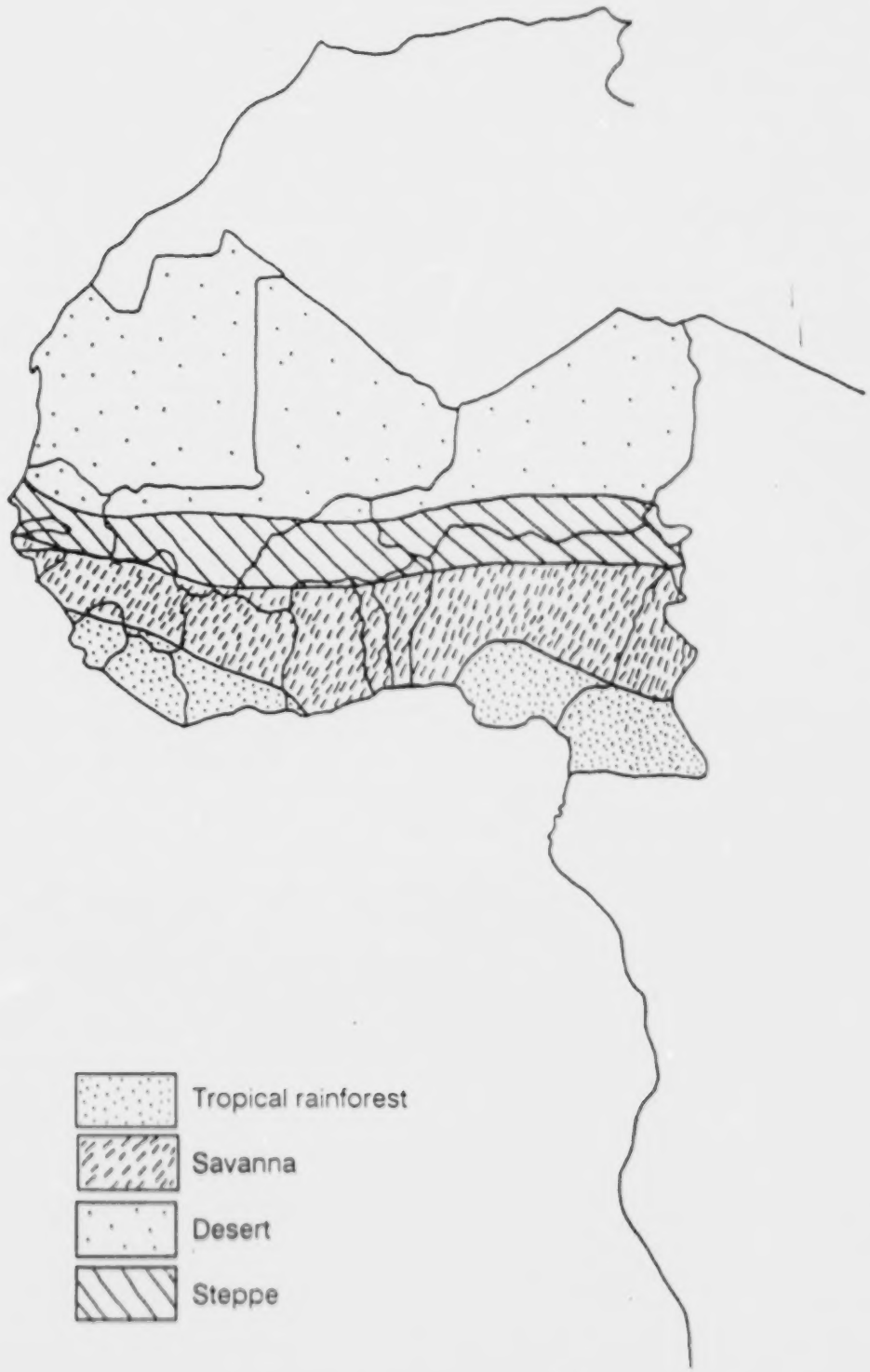
Handout 3-2
Map of Climate Regions in West Africa



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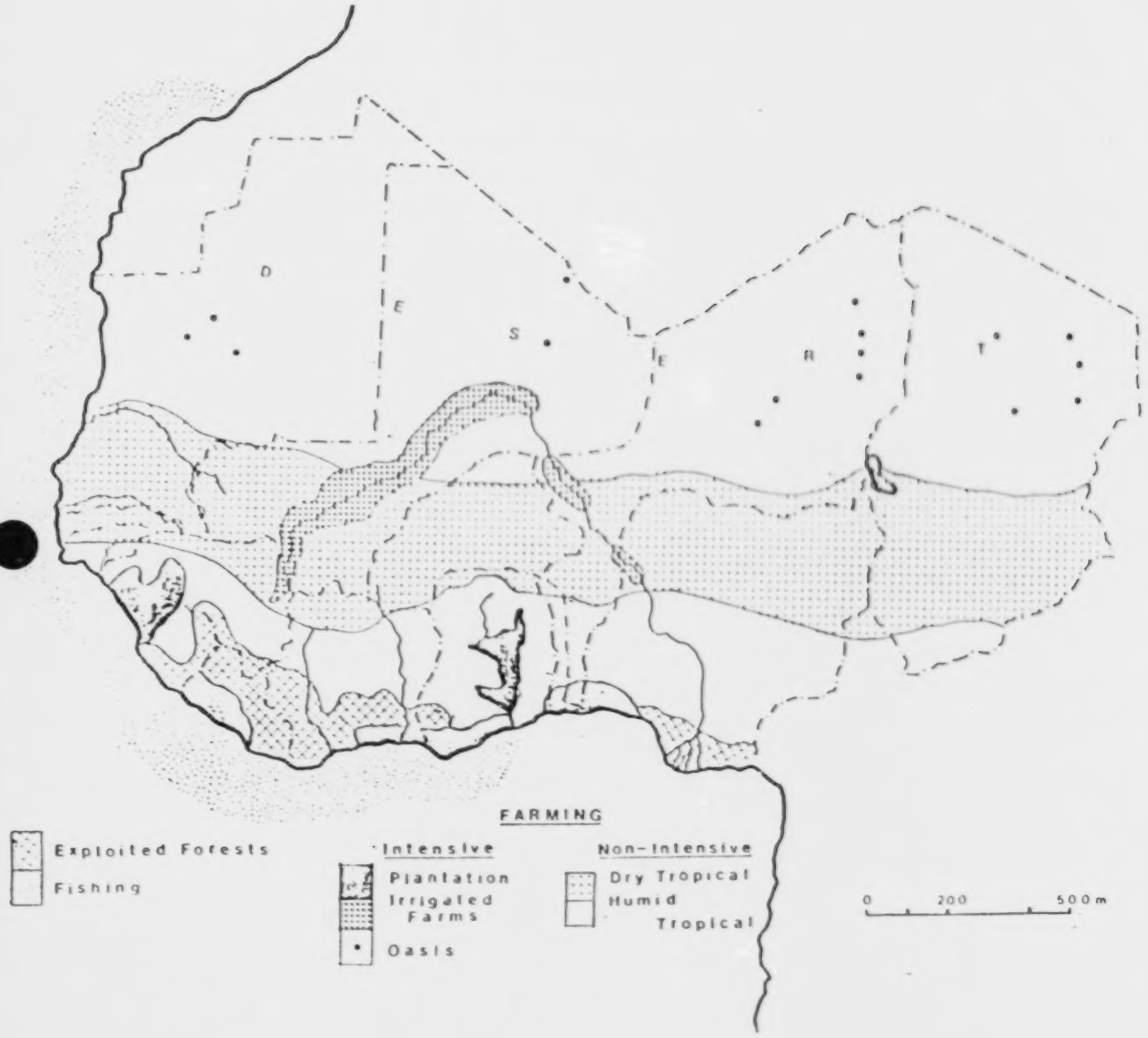
Handout 3-3a
Agricultural Patterns in Africa

by Jerry Hanson



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Handout 3-3b
Where Am I?

Using your data sheets and maps of Ghana, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, and Mali, figurein which country each of the following could be found in.

1. The city of Abidjan has a population of 2.5 million people. It has magnificent scenery, but is one of the world's most expensive cities.

2. Oil wells dot the Niger River delta, providing the country's major export income and making this country the fifth largest oil producer in the world. Cocoa, rubber, palm oil and kola nuts are also produced in the Niger delta.

3. Over a thousand years old, Kano has been an important trading center and textile producer. It was a key city in the Sokoto Caliphate, an Islamic empire founded in 1805. The emir's palace, the old city walls and the central mosque are evidence of its long history.

4. From 1200 to 1800 this country was the location of great empires such as the Songhay, Mali and Segou empires. During the middle ages the city of Timbuktu had out of the world's outstanding universities.

5. Kumasi is the old capitol of the Asante empire which was founded by Osei Tutu in 1689. The Asante King still lives here and has influence. Kumasi is also the home of the University of Science and Technology.

6. Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka writes novels and plays about the past and present of his country. His autobiographical book, Ake, the World of Childhood, describes his life as the son of a teacher in a town near Abeokuta.

7. The capitol city, Lagos, has approximately ten million people. It is well known for its incredible rush hour traffic and for its outstanding musicians. Like most national capitols, it has embassies, government buildings, crowded slums and luxurious suburbs.

8. Savannah and desert make up this country's vegetation. The main cities--Bamako, Segou, Mopti, Timbuktu and Gao--are all on the Niger River.

9. Lake Volta, one of the largest lakes in Africa, is near the center of the country. It was formed by damming the Volta River.

10. The official language of this country is English, but Akan, Twi, Fante, Ga, Ewe, Dagbeni, Hausa and Nzima are also spoken. In Accra, the capitol city, most citizens will speak several languages in addition to English.

11. This country , which has no outlet to the ocean, was the center of trading empires based on trade in salt and gold across the Sahara.

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Handout 3-3c

12. This country with an area of 124,503 square miles is the world's primary producer of cocoa and the third largest producer of coffee (1986). It also produces coconuts, bananas, pineapples, palm kernals and cotton.

13. Islam is the religion of about 90% of the population of this French-speaking country. Most of the people speak both French and Bambara.

14. This country with a population of about 10.5 million consists of more than 60 tribes and has French as the national language. Many of the villages near Mount Korhogo are known for weavings, ironwork, and hand-painted cloth.

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Handout 3-3d

The University of Ghana

Lagos

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Handout 3-3e

A view of the Plateau District in Abidjan

Ivoire Complex, Côte d'Ivoire

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4. West Africa in the World Economy

Subject: Social studies

Overview:

This lesson will give students the opportunity to explore economic issues which concern contemporary Africans.

Objectives:

1. Students will explore economic choices made by three African leaders in the agricultural and food processing sectors.
2. Students will compare information on agricultural choices with climate and vegetation type information from Lesson 3.
3. Students will explore possibilities for future international connections between the U.S.and West Africa.

Materials and Preparation Needed:

Handouts 4-1, 4-2, 4-3 and 4-4
Country data sheets from Lesson 2

Activity:

1. Hand out the articles on Rebecca Larea, Esther Ocloo and General Obasanjo. Refer to maps from Lesson 3 to locate where they live, the climate and agricultural patterns. You might divide the class into three groups with each group taking the story of one of the Africans. Ask them to describe the kind of work the person does and what each contributes to her/his country. Then ask students to brainstorm the way this person's work could affect trade with the U.S. Note, these articles are used courtesy of the Hunger Project. *The African Farmer*, a quarterly publication, can be obtained from The Hunger Project Global Office, One Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10010. Their telephone number is 212-532-4255.
2. Ask students to brainstorm all of the things that they think we import from Africa and the things that they think Africans import from the U.S. Put the lists on the board. Give students the list of imports and exports from Nigeria and compare them to their guesses. Have students look back to the country data sheets from lesson 2 to look for other products Americans import or export from Africa.
3. Give students the handout, "African Trade Delegation" and ask students to read the first paragraph. Discuss why Africans might be interested in visiting your community and why the governor chose the people he did for the delegation. Have them do the task on the handout. Suggest that they refer to the handouts on imports and exports and the African leaders handout for ideas.
4. For additional research, have students find out trade connections between their communities and African countries. Have students compare the trade information on the data sheets of different African countries.

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Handout 4-1

An African Farmer's Decisions

In the past two years, Rebecca Laryea has won an award for being the best cowpea farmer in her sub-district of Katamanso, about 36 miles from Ghana's capital, Accra, and has been chosen to take part in a two-week, Swiss-sponsored workshop in agroforestry.

The 49-year-old farmer sees these as a reward for years of hard work, "I never joke about my farming because that is what my ten-member family and I live on. I plant at the right time and weed my crops regularly," says Ms. Laryea.

Although this untiring woman may not joke about farming, she is always experimenting with it, trying new methods and inputs to enhance her yields. Last year an experiment with intercropping paid off, giving "exceptionally high" yields of cassava, cocoyam and maize.

For several years Ms. Laryea has used chemical fertilizer, but since cash is increasingly hard to come by she is cutting back on this. "There are a lot of cattle ranches here so I use free cow-dung."

She is now anxious to try alley-cropping, one of the techniques she learned at the agroforestry workshop. "They taught me that if I plant trees like Leu-caena in a row, I can plant crops in between," says Ms. Laryea. "After a year I cut the branches and allow them to rot. Later, when I plough the rot under, it will mix with the soil and I won't have to buy any fertilizer. That means a savings of about 40,000 cedis ($120 dollars) each season--which is also what she earns.

Ms. Laryea says that the savings will be used to finish educating the two of her seven children that are still in secondary school. All of her older children work daily in her fields and one attends agricultural college. Her husband also spends a lot of time helping with the garden.

The land she farms, about 6.5 acres, is controlled by the village chief, who is also Ms. Laryea's father. She grows just about 2.5 acres each of peppers and tomatoes, cassava, maize, cocoyam and some cowpeas. She is always looking for ways to ensure a good harvest and the best income possible. Last year, for example, the rains came late. This year they did not come. But by obtaining permission to cultivate 2 acres near a dam that, she had noticed, always had sufficient water, Ms. Laryea kept crop failure at bay.

On this plot she planted peppers, which provided more insurance than other crops because she boils and dries them. That way she can sell them after the season for 33 times what she could have earned when the markets were full.

Ms. Laryea believes that her best insurance is to preserve foodstuffs for the lean season. But she does not have the necessary storage or techniques, and since her husband's income is only a small pension, half of her produce must be sold at harvest for the family's upkeep.

Lately Ms. Laryea has become intent on ploughing with a bullock rather than a tractor. She feels the tractor blades destroy the soil by sending the rich upper crust down and turning up less fertile elements. Last season she used a borrowed bullock rather than hiring a neighbor and his tractor. The results, she says, "were impressive."

Africa's farmers, says Ms. Laryea, need to be innovative and receptive to new methods. They also need to be emotionally strong, dedicated and hardworking.

Last year, Ms Laryea has a chance to take her own advice.. Just before harvest time pigs invaded the farm, destroying everything. Recalling the experience, she says, "I felt like weeping--all the money, energy and time spent became a waste." But she refused to be defeated. Instead, she took some money she had saved for one child's education and invested it in more seed and inputs. She was more than rewarded when that same child won a scholarship and she won the award for being the best cowpea farmer.

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--Margaret Safo. From *African Farmer*, November 1990. Used by permission of the Hunger Project

Handout 4-2
Two African Leaders

An African Politician and Farmer

In 1990, General Olusegun Obasanjo, former Nigerian head of state, and Esther Ocloo, an entrepreneur who has provided opportunities for Ghanaians, were named winners of the fourth annual Africa Prize for Leadership for the Sustainable End of Hunger. Their stories and the story of Rebecca Laryea illustrate different dimensions of African agriculture and food industries.

A Politician and Farmer

Born in 1935, General Olusegun Obasanjo rose from the rank of lieutenant in the armed forces to full general and chief of staff, and became head of his country's government, serving from 1976 to 1979. During his tenure, his "Operation Feed the Nation" was the first high-level strategic effort to end the nation's dependence on food imports.

Following a peaceful transfer from military to civilian rule, General Obasanjo turned to farming on his 80 acre farm and launched a crusade to revitalize the agricultural sector and give agriculture its rightful place in Africa's economy. His farm employs more than 400 workers, producing vegetables, seeds and other crops as well as rabbits, fish and cattle. It also provides training to local farmers and collaborates with crop and animal research institutes.

Besides becoming the most prominent advocate of the resourcefulness, creativity and traditional expertise of Africa's farmers, Obasanjo has supported leadership as the other key factor in Africa's survival. In 1988 he created the Africa Leadership Forum an ongoing series of discussions designed to help prepare African leaders to meet the challenges they face today.

An African Businesswoman

Esther Ocloo began her career with 12 jars of marmalade that she made from oranges bought with ten shillings given to her by an aunt. These jars were the start of the first large industrial food-processing plant in Ghana. That was in 1943. Today Ms. Ocloo's company, Nkulenu Industries, bottles orange juice concentrate, jams, marmalade, and tins of palm oil and cream of palm fruits.

Ms. Ocloo's involvement in the food industry has made her especially concerned that her country be self-reliant in every way possible. She was the key founder and the first woman president of the Ghana Manufacturers Association, now called the Association of Ghana Industries. She was also the first woman to be executive chairperson of the Ghana National Food and Nutrition Board.

Ms. Ocloo is especially honored, not only for her leadership, but also for generating opportunities for low-income people, particularly women. In the 1970s Ms. Ocloo began to share her skills with Africans on an increasingly large scale. At the request of the African Training and Research Centre for Women of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, she began training women from many countries in food processing, using her own company's facilities as well as visiting training sites set up by the ECA.

Ms. Ocloo is a key founder of Women's World Banking, an international bank designed to provide credit for women. In 1978 this energetic businesswoman and philanthropist established the Ghanaian branch of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women and set up programs to reach low-income women. Three years later, as African vice president for the International BPW, she developed a region-wide workshop in food processing, which has trained hundreds of West African Women.

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--Shannon A. Horst. From *African Farmer*, November 1990. Used by permission of the Hunger Project

Handout 4-3
Imports, Exports and Investment Opportunities of Nigeria

Natural Resources
1. crude oil
2. tin
3. iron ore
4. coal
5. limestone
6. lead
7. zinc
8. natural gas

Agricultural Products
1. peanuts
2. cotton
3. rubber
4. cocoa
5. yams
6. cassava
7. grains
8. livestock

Major exports
1. oil
2. cocoa
3. rubber
4. timber
5. tin

Major Imports
1. machinery
2. transport equipment
3. manufactured goods
4. chemicals
5. foodstuffs

Investment Opportunities

These are some of the industries Nigeria is trying to develop. They are encouraging Americans to invest money and technology in helping develop them.

fish farming	rice processing	vegetable oil processing
fruit juice processing	textiles	glass ware
spring water bottling	tool production	glue production
rubber products	paper production	cosmetic production
concrete	pottery	particle board production

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Handout 4-4
African Trade Delegation

Imagine that a trade delegation from the African country you have been studying is visiting your community. The leader, the governor of a state, has brought with him a large delegation including a university administrator, several businessmen, and a couple of farmers. They want to meet people and visit farms and companies in your community that might be able to provide them with education, training, equipment, or goods they might want to buy and companies and businesses that might want to buy their products.

Design a five-day tour of your city, listing the people you would like them to meet and the places that you would have them visit. (Your teacher will tell you whether to research real people in your community or whether you can use your imagination and make up people and industries.)

Use the country data sheets and stories of African leaders to help you decide who would be best for them to meet. Imports are things a country buys from another country. Do you have people in your community who make these things? Exports are things the country sells to other countries. Do you have people in your community who could use these things?

One of the biggest international businesses is knowledge and technology. People pay to learn the knowledge and skill they need to develop a new industry. Do you have people who could sell training for the industries your country is trying to develop? Do you have people who could sell them equipment for these new industries?

Look at your country's natural resources and agricultural products on the data sheets. Can you think of other things that they could make or export that they are not now producing? Is there anyone in your community that could help them develop those resources?

Another important international business connection is money. People who have saved money often invest in countries that are building new industries. Are there people in your community who might like to invest in African industries?

Use your imagination to think of other people in your community who might like to do business with an African country.

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5. Major Kingdoms, Communities, and Countries

Contributions by Dr. Antony Hobbs, Linda Mahan, Amy Sixbey, and Linda Eilers

Subject: History

Overview:

Students will explore major events in West African history and their impact on the development of kingdoms and communities. They will locate them on a timeline and a map and will explore the way they were organized and governed.

Objectives:

1. To learn a general sequence of major events in West African history.
2. To explore the impact of historical events on the development of communities.
3. To learn that West African societies shared many historical experiences, but also had differences in historical experiences.
3. (optional) To learn and practice research skills.

Materials Needed:

Handouts 5-1, 5-2, 5-3, 5-4
Country histories
History books and videos (See recommended in the appendix.)

Activities:

Activity 1: Historical injustice as a barrier to community

Have students read the study sheet, "Historical Connections." Discuss the following questions:

1. Do the things that happened to Kofi and Tom still affect the relationships between black and white Americans and between Americans and Africans?
2. Do you agree with Keesha and Samantha that it is better not to know bad things that happened in the past? Are there reasons that we do need to know the bad as well as the good from the past? For example, should the Russians know about Stalin and the Germans about concentration camps? If so, why?

Activity 2: Timeline

1. Hand out the timeline to students. Choose activities appropriate to the level of your students.

a. Cut the timeline apart and hand each student one piece. Have them line up in front of the room in the order in which their events occurred. When you read off their time period, have them read their slip and show on a map where the event happened.
b. With the timelines in front of them, ask students to imagine that they had a time machine and were trying to find the following scenes. Have students give the date they would look for the following.

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-The invention of agriculture
-The first person learning to be a blacksmith
-The first army
-The wealthiest king
-The first slaves being taken to America
-The first revolts against the Europeans

Point out to students (if they do not figure it out) that the timeline represents the first evidence we have of these things. They were probably developed somewhat earlier. Explain to students that we do not have a whole lot of written history about West Africa before 1500 A.D., so earlier dates are somewhat uncertain.

c. If students are doing research papers or dramas on a country or community have them find the following on their timeline—or make their best guess. Have students try to picture what probably happened to their community at that time.

-When their community developed its own identity and culture.
-Any time when their community was conquered by another African ethnic group.
-Any time when their community conquered another African ethnic group.
-Any contacts their community had with Islam.
-Any contacts their community had with Europeans.
-Conquest of their community by Europeans.
-Role their community plays in modern nations.

2. Assign each student to do a timeline for their community up to the present using information from the timeline handout as well as other information they can gather from research. Assign them to prepare a report including a map showing the location of the group, the dates it existed, and as much information as possible about the way it was governed and the way of life of the people.

3. Have students watch the video series, Africa: A Voyage of Discovery with Basil Davidson. After each program, have them incorporate the events on their timelines. See summaries of each program on Resource List.

4. Have students use the computer research to gather information about contemporary African nations. Have each group prepare a chart with the African nations (old and new names), their capitals, and the year in which each became independent. Have each country group stage a ceremony marking the independence of the country of which they are now a part.

5. Divide students into groups and assign them an African leader or kingdom to study. They should find out:

a. Where the person lived. Locate the homeland of the person on a map. If possible, show the town or city where he or she lived and the boundaries of the kingdom or empire.

b. When s/he lived. Show the person's dates on a timeline.

c. The contribution s/he made to her/his community.

Have students present their findings to the whole class.

Construct a class timeline showing when each person lived. Construct a map showing the location of cities and kingdoms where people lived.

Discuss similarities and differences among the leaders.

6. After doing research on the events on the timeline, have students make a class mural showing major events in West African history. Students may draw or paint the events or people they researched. Or have students paint posters on the event or person they have researched and arrange them in chronological order around the room or in the school hallways.

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Activity 3: Goree Island

Have students read the selection on Goree Island and the slave trade. What features of the transatlantic slave trade made it particularly cruel and destructive? Does it make a difference to your understanding if you study the full timeline of African history or if you start the history of African Americans in the Americas?

Note: If you do not do Lesson 6 on sources of African history, be sure to point out that the materials in this lesson are secondary sources, they are put together from materials readily available in the United States. Africans might have selected different events as important.

The country sheets are based on US Department of State Background Notes, available from the US Government Printing Office, Washington D.C. 20402. They are a readily available, up-to-date source of information. However, their focus is on U.S. interests in relationship to the country, not on the interests of the country itself.

Also note how the US Department of State materials describe the colonial period more from the European perspective. For example, notice how the following sentence from the Mali country notes sounds different if the subject of the sentence is changed from the European to the African. The information is the same, but ask students if they do not get a different impression of what was happening from the two sentences. Have them find other sentences in which changing the subject of the sentence has the same effect.

"From 1826 to 1900, the British fought a series of campaigns against the Ashantis, whose kingdom was located inland."

"From 1826 to 1900 the Ashantis defended their inland kingdom against the British."

Point out to students that sources from the American point of view are not wrong. Material written from the African point of view is also biased. The best approach is to try to read material from several sources; however, material with an African point of view is not as readily available. It is important for a reader to be aware how subtle choices of grammar and vocabulary make a difference in their understanding of events.

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Handout 5-1
Our History/Our Connection

Story One:

Kofi was awakened by screams, gunshots and the flash of fire. He rushed out of his burning house, only to be grabbed from behind and dragged to the edge of the village where his hands and feet were tied. Behind him, he could hear the screams of his family and relatives. He never knew what happened to his father or mother or three sisters. Two of his cousins were tied with him and marched for several days to the coast, but they were then separated and he never saw them again. Soon he was bound in the hold of a ship and he never saw Africa again. He never saw any of his own people, and to survive in the new land, he had to learn a new language and a new way of life.

Story Two:

Tom ran away from home when he was fifteen and went to sea looking for adventure. He didn't know what he was getting into. He signed on to a ship taking rum and other New England products to England. But then the ship continued on to Africa where it picked up slaves. Tom was horrified at what he saw—at human beings crowded by force into filthy quarters, women raped, people dying by the day, and both men and women jumping into the ocean. The worst was that nobody else seemed to be bothered—or else they hid their feelings by drinking and joking and cursing. Tom didn't say anything either. He was scared at what the older seamen might do if he did. But when he got home to New England, he left the sea and soon went west to seek his fortune on the frontier. He never wanted to hear anything about Africa again.

Story Three:

It is now two hundred years later. Keesha is a descendant of Kofi, but she has no record of her ancestors and doesn't want to hear about it. She knows that some of her ancestors were slaves and that's too painful to think about. The only things she has heard about Africa were pretty embarrassing—dumb, naked, primitive people better off forgotten.

Story Four:

Samantha is a descendant of Tom. Her grandfather has studied family history and has the story of how their ancester, Tom, went west and bought his farm. She thought the story was pretty interesting the first five times he told it. She was interested in history about the Revolutionary War, but she got pretty bored when the teacher talked about slavery. It was so awful she didn't want to hear about it. She also wished her grandfather would quit probing around family history during that time. If any of her ancestors had been involved with slavery, she didn't want to hear about it.

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Handout 5-2a
Building and Rebuilding Communities
A West African Timeline

Based on lectures by Dr. Rich Corby, Dr. LeRoy Williams,
and secondary sources compiled by Dr. Barbara Stanford

Note: In parentheses are contemporary names of countries where historic events took place. In many cases a historic kingdom is not located in the same place as the present country with that name.

Period before written history. Development of agricultural communities.

10-15,000 B.C.: Hoe cultures found in coastal West Africa. Possible invention of agriculture.

About 3,000 B.C. or earlier: Rock paintings show evidence of grain agricultural society with chariots and possible trade with Egypt in area where Sahara desert now is.

3,000-2,000 B.C.: The Sahara becomes desert again. On edges, definite evidence of agriculture is found in southern Mauritania. Agriculture spreads and population increases.

3,000 B.C.: Development of forest agriculture based on yams in coastal West Africa. (Nigeria)

2,000-100 B.C.: Trade routes across the Sahara link Timbuktu and the Central Niger region with Phoenicians and Greeks. (Mali)

About 400 B.C.: Nok culture in Nigeria learns to work iron. Also creates fine sculptures. (Nigeria)

Growth of major kingdoms and empires and spread of Islam.

5th Century A.D.: Kingdom of Ghana was founded by the Soninke people between the Senegal and Niger rivers in what is now Mali. Ghana controlled the trans-Saharan salt and gold trade. The Ghanaian kings had large armies. (Mali)

Date Unknown: Ibo develop forest agricultural communities in Nigeria and develop a unique religious and democratic form of government—a federation of communities with complex legal procedures and a market system. (Nigeria)

8th Century: Islam spread through West Africa by Berbers. With Islam came Arabic, writing in Arabic and local languages written in Arabic script. (Mali, Mauritania, Senegal)

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Handout 5-2b

1076: Almarovids attack Ghana and bring Islam by force. (Morocco, Mali, Mauritania)

1200-1300: Founding of Mali empire by the Malinke. Ruled by Sundiata Keita. (Mali, Senegal, The Gambia, and parts of Guinea and Burkina Faso)

1275: Songhai rebels against Mali. (Mali, Burkina Faso)

1312-1337: Mansa Musa rules Mali. (Mali, Senegal, Gambia)

13th Century: Benin becomes a major city. It became famous for bronze sculptures. (Nigeria)

1450 (approximately): Fulani migrate from Mali to northern Nigeria.

1464-1492: Sonni Ali rules Songhai. (Mali, Burkina Faso)

Europeans begin trade. African kingdoms continue and Islam continues to spread.

1471: Portuguese reach the coast of Ghana. They set up trading forts to collect gold and slaves.15-17th Century—Slavery existed all over world. In Africa, usually through war. Estimate 11 million taken from Africa and 9 million reached America. (Ghana)

1493-1528: Askia Muhammad rules Songhai empire. (Mali, Burkina Faso)

15th Century: Muhammad al-Maghili brings Islamic law to Kano and other kingdoms of northern Nigeria.

1590: Sultan of Morocco, Al-Mansur conquers Songhai. He brings guns into the region. (Morocco, Mauritania, Mali)

17th Century: British and French sail along coast and set up trading centers. They were under the rule of Africans and confined to the coast. Africans tried to keep information about the interior from them.

1787: The Sierra Leone Company, founded by British abolitionists, sends people of African ancestry to West Africa where they establish Freetown, Sierra Leone. In 1792 more freed slaves come from Nova Scotia and Jamaica.

1700-1900: Islamic movements aim at purifying religion and converting the masses and setting up Islamic states. (Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Northern Nigeria)

1790: British Christian missionaries appear in Sierra Leone.

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Handout 5-2c

1804: A Moslum Fulani, Uthman dan Fodio leads a religious war to purify Islamic practices in Northern Nigeria.

1807: British back Fante in war against Asante. British begin more active defiance of African laws and began to take over territory. (Ghana)

1808: Slave trade declared illegal in U.S.

1816: Liberia is set up by Americans for freed slaves.

1850s: Al-Haj Umar of Tukolor conquers land between the Senegal River Valley and Timbuktu and spreads Islam.

1870s: Many African Americans and African Europeans move to Sierra Leone and Liberia. U.S. blacks go to Liberia and blacks from Jamaica, Nova Scotia and England go to Sierra Leone.

Europeans shift from trading relationships to conquest.

1870s: French begin to push into the interior of Senegal to gain territory.

19th Century: European trading companies such as the British Royal Niger company begin to move into the interior.

1884: European countries meet in Berlin to agree on how to divide Africa.

1890-1910: Europeans conquer most of West Africa. Liberia was the only country which retained its independence. Togo was conquered by Germany, Guinea Bisseau by the Portuguese, and the rest by Britain and France.

1901: Asante Kingdom is conquered after a series of wars. (Ghana)

1901-1919: British undertake a number of military campaigns against Iboland. Initially their goal is to keep trade routes open, but gradually developed control. In 1914, Nigeria is formed out of various British protectorates.

1903: British defeat Fulani Emir of Kano and Caliph of Sokoto. (Nigeria)

Europeans rule most of Africa as colonies.

1900-1920: British and French install colonial systems of rule in West Africa.

1930: During the Great Depression, African economy also was hurt. The British tried to force Africans into a cash economy.

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Handout 5-2d

1920-1939: The British and French exploit mineral, agricultural, and human resources. They do little to benefit West Africans. The roads, health clinics and schools which are set up are paid for by West Africans through taxes or developed on their own initiative.

1940s: Many West Africans fought for the British and French in World War II. Many fought in India. The war ended with the Europeans weaker and the Africans more aware of their vulnerabilities. Africans no longer accepted the myths of European superiority on which colonialism was founded.

1945-1960: British and French begin to spend money on building schools, roads, and other things to help improve the lives of West Africans. West Africans also begin to demand independence. After World War II the British and French realize that the age of colonialism is over.

African nations become independent.

1948: Kwame Nkrumah organizes strikes to promote independence in Ghana.

1950s: Leopold Senghor of Senegal and others write literature about the concept of Negritude and the importance of independence both culturally and economically.

1957: Ghana becomes independent. Beginning with the independence of Ghana, West Africans win independence in a mostly peaceful manner in the next eight years.

1958: Sekou Toure of Guinea declares independence from France and France cuts off all aid. Other French colonies become independent but retain ties with France.

1963: Organization of African Unity formed.

1966: Coup overthrows Nkrumah in Ghana. From 1965 to 1990 West African governments are frequently dominated by military dictatorships and one-party states. Economic growth is very slow.

1966: Conflict spreads throughout Nigeria. Several military coups and assassinations occurred. Conflicts between Hausa and Igbo intensify. Igbos declare independence and name eastern Nigeria, Biafra. An intense civil war continues until 1970 when then Igbo surrender.

1960 and 70s: African nations struggle to design political systems and develop their economies using African traditions in a global economy. Military dictatorships take control in many countries.

1980s: Global economic forces lead to widespread debt and depression. Efforts continue to develop democracies based on African values and customs.

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Handout 5-3
Goree Island

The port of slaves to the Americas, Goree Island, is located about two miles off the coast of the African nation, Senegal. For centuries African slaves were sent from this island to North Africa, Tripoli and Egypt; in return for goods from the Mediterranean and Asia. The large-scale organized exportation of slaves, however, dates from the opening of the Atlantic trade routes to the West Indies and the Americas, in the second half of the Seventeenth Century.

The Portuguese were the first to establish themselves on the island of Goree in 1444. By the latter half of the Sixteenth Century, the Dutch replaced the Portutuese. Dating from this period, the great trading companies of Europe were formed bringing together shipowners, businessmen and bankers under the protection of their governments to exploit the triangular trade in humans and merchandise established between Europe, Africa and America.

Under the control of the Dutch, Goree became an important transit point for the burgeoning of the African slave trade. The English seized control of the island in 1633, but it was ceded to France in 1678 by the Treaty of Nunegul, becoming a way station of the French West African empire, ruled at Dakar, then a major city of Senegal. Now it is Senegal's capitol.

The slave station or house is built at the water's edge; the large porches open onto an interior courtyard ground of which the wings of the building are clustered. There are two levels, one of the "masters" upstairs with high ceilings; and one for the African slaves who were confined in cells, with low ceilings which was on the ground floor. The number of persons who could be held in each house varied from 150 to 200; men, women and children.

They sat with their backs against the wall, held down by shackles on their necks and arms. Often the entire families would be held relegated to separate cells.

Their departure depended on their purchasers. The father might go to Louisiana in the United States. The mother might to to Brazil or Cuba; and the child to Haiti.

They left Goree through a portal (an open door) at the end of the Corridor (the door of no return again to Africa). Facing the sea were two open porches where armed guards watched for slaves trying to escape by diving into the sea--a futile gesture in the shark- infested waters.

Please note, these men, women and children literally crossed over into another world abandoning what had been and becoming a people of the future. Once on the plantations they were renamed, taking the names of their masters. The slave masters literally transformed them into a new or another people, from African to Negro.

Please note, for hundreds of years many and most of the African-Negro slaves did not know who they were or where they came from. This is one of the reasons why the European Americans (whites) did not teach them their history and this is why they generally oppose the teaching of African and African American history in the public schools today.

The slave trade lasted three centuries (300 years) from the first Portuguese slave station on Goree Island, Senegal in 1444 until 1848, the date of the abolition of slavery by France. During this time it is estimated that 15 million Africans left Goree for the Americas.

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-- by Dr. Antony O. Hobbs, based on a visit to Goree Island

Handout 5-4
Research on Africa with a Computer

by Amy Sixbey

These activities will help you learn to use a computer data base as well as learn information about Africa. This lesson is specifically designed for *Microsoft Works* software with an Africa data base, but can be adapted to other data base programs with the same capacities.

Part One: Learn to Use a Database

Activity 1: Take notes and watch a demonstration of a data base. Take notes on search, sort and query. Open your data base files and practice search, sort, and query on the Africa data base.

Activity 2: Go through the tutorial that accompanies your software program on reports. Ask your teacher for explanations as needed.

Activity 3: Create a report using the Africa data base.

Part Two: Create Your Own Database

Working with your group, create a data base about West African history, contemporary West African nations or major West African ethnic groups.

Activity 1: Inventory what you already know about your subject. Hold a class discussion about topics.

Activity 2: Work in groups and ask each other questions about your subjects. Ask who, what, where, when and how questions. Then brainstorm and add additional questions to the list.

Activity 3: Select eight to ten questions from your list that will give you the most important facts. These questions will help you in your research. They will be a starting point.

Activity 4: Begin to research using Comptons'computer encyclopedia, the library or the resources of your choice.

Activity 5: Meet back with your group and share the data you have collected so far. How many of your questions can you answer? What new questions have you come up with from your research?

Activity 6: Decide what type of information you need to answer your questions. Designate field names at this time.

Activity 7: Create a data base using the information you have researched.

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History of Ghana

Early History

Most Ghanaians descended from migrating tribes that probably came down the Volta River valley at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Ethnically, Ghana is divided into small groups speaking more than 50 languages and dialects. Among the more important linguistic groups are the Akans, which include the Fantis along the coast and the Ashantis in the forest region north of the coast; the Guans, on the plains of the Volta River; the Ga- and Ewe-speaking peoples of the south and southeast; and the Moshi-Dagomba-speaking tribes of the northern and upper regions.

Period of Major Kingdoms

The history of the Gold Coast before the last quarter of the 15th century is derived primarily from oral tradition that refers to migrations from the ancient kingdoms of the western Soudan (the area of Mauritania and Mali). The Gold Coast was renamed Ghana upon independence in 1957 because of indications that present-day inhabitants descended from migrants who moved south from the ancient kingdom of Ghana.

European Contacts

The first contact between Europe and the Gold Coast dates from 1470, when a party of Portuguese landed. During the next three centuries, the English, Danes, Dutch, Germans, and Portuguese controlled various parts of the coastal areas.

In 1821, the British Government took control of the British trading forts on the Gold Coast. From 1826 to 1900, the British fought a series of campaigns against the Ashantis, whose kingdom was located inland. In 1902, they succeeded in colonizing the Ashanti region and making the northern territories a protectorate.

In 1951, a constitution was promulgated that called for a greatly enlarged legislature composed principally of members elected by popular vote. A new constitution, approved on April 29, 1954, established a cabinet comprising African ministers drawn from an all-African legislature chosen by direct election. In the elections that followed, the Convention People's Party (CPP), led by Kwame Nkrumah, won the majority of seats in the new Legislative Assembly.

Independence

In 1956, Prime Minister Nkrumah's Gold Coast government issued a white paper containing proposals for Gold Coast independence. The British Government stated it would agree to a firm date for independence if a reasonable majority for such a step were obtained in the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly after a general election. This election, held in 1956, returned Nkrumah's party to power with 71 of the 104 seats in the Legislative Assembly.

Ghana became an independent state on March 6, 1957, when the United Kingdom relinquished its control. After independence, the government under Nkrumah sought to develop Ghana as a modern, semi-industrialized, unitary socialist state. The government emphasized political and economic organization, endeavoring to increase stability and productivity through labor, youth, farmers, cooperatives, and other organizations integrated with the CPP. The party gradually increased its power and limited rights until in 1964 Ghana was changed to a one-party state.

On February 24, 1966, the Ghanaian Army and police overthrew Nkrumah's regime. Nkrumah and all his ministers were dismissed. Since then, Ghana has made several attempts to develop an effective democratic government, but most have ended with military coups. Flt. Lt. Jerry Rawlings and the Provisional National Defense Council ruled the country during most of the 1980s. Members of the judiciary and civil service remained at their posts and committees of civil servants were established to handle the administration of the country.

Ghana's government returned to civilian authority under the Second Republic in October 1969 after a parliamentary election in which the Progress Party, led by Kofi A. Busia, won 105 of the 140 seats. Until mid-1970, the powers of the chief of state were held by a presidential commission led by Brigadier A. A. Afrifa. In a special election on August 31, 1970, former Chief Justice Edward Akufo-Addo was chosen president, and Dr. Busia became prime minister. Faced with mounting economic problems, Prime Minister Busia's government undertook a drastic devaluation of the currency in December 1971. The government's inability to control the subsequent inflationary pressures stimulated further discontent, and military officers seized power in a bloodless coup on January 13, 1972.

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History of Cote d'Ivoire

Early History

The early history of Cote d'Ivoire is virtually unknown, although it is thought that a neolithic culture existed there. France made its initial contact with Cote d'Ivoire in 1637, when missionaries landed at Assinie near the Gold Coast (now Ghana) border. Early contacts were limited to a few missionaries because of the inhospitable coastline and settlers' fear of the inhabitants.

In the eighteenth century, the country was invaded by two related ethnic groups: the Agnis, who occupied the southeast, and the Baoules, who settled in the central section. In 1843-44, Adm. [illegible] Williaumez signed treaties with the kings of the Grand Bassam and Assinie regions, placing their territories under a French protectorate. French explorers, missionaries, trading companies, and soldiers gradually extended the area under French control inland from the lagoon region.

Colonization

Cote d'Ivoire officially became a French colony in 1893. Captain Binger, who had explored the Gold Coast frontier, was named the first governor. He negotiated boundary treaties with Liberia and the United Kingdom (for the Gold Coast) and later started the campaign against Almany Samory, a Malinke chief, who waged war against the French until 1898.

From 1904 to 1958, Cote d'Ivoire was a constituent unit of the Federation of French West Africa (now Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Benin, Burkina, and Cote d'Ivoire). Until the period following World War II, governmental affairs in French West Africa were administered from Paris through governors general and territorial governors. France's policy in West Africa was reflected mainly in its philosophy of "association," meaning that all Africans in Cote d'Ivoire were officially French "subjects" without rights to representation in Africa or France.

Independence

In December 1958, Cote d'Ivoire became an autonomous republic within the French community as a result of a referendum that brought community status to all members of the old Federation of French West Africa except Guinea, which had voted against association. Cote d'Ivoire became independent on August 7, 1960, and permitted its community membership to lapse.

. Cote d'Ivoire's contemporary political history is closely associated with the career of Felix Houphouet-Boigny, president of the republic and leader of the Parti Democratique de la Cote d'Ivoire (PDCI). Houphouet-Boigny first came to national political prominence in 1944 as founder of the Syndicat Agricole Africain, an organization that won improved labor conditions for African farmers. After World War II, he was elected by a narrow margin
to the first Constituent Assembly. Representing Cote d'Ivoire in the French National Assembly from 1946 to 1959, he devoted much of his effort to interterritorial political organization and further amelioration of labor conditions. After his 13-year service in the French National Assembly, including almost 3 years as a minister in the French Government, he became Cote d'Ivoire's first prime minister in April 1959, and the following year was elected its first president.

In May 1959, Houphouet-Boigny reinforced his position as a dominant figure in West Africa by leading Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, Upper Volta (Burkina), and Dahomey (Benin) into the Council of the Entente, a regional organization promoting economic development.(Togo joined in 1966.) He has maintained that the only true road to African solidarity is through step-by-step economic and political cooperation, recognizing the principle of nonintervention in the internal affairs of other African states.

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History of Mali

Mali's population consists of diverse sub-Saharan ethnic groups, sharing similar historic, cultural, and religious traditions. Exceptions are the Tuaregs and Moors, desert nomads, related to the North African Berbers.

Historically, good interethnic relations throughout the rest of the country were facilitated by easy mobility on the country's vast savannahs. Each ethnic group was traditionally tied to a specific occupation, all working within close proximity. The Bambara, Malinke, Sarakole, and Voltaic were farmers; the Peulh, Moor, and Tuareg, herders; and the Bozo, fishers. In recent years, this linkage has shifted as ethnic groups seek diverse, nontraditional sources of income. Along the Niger River between Timbuktu and Gao, the Songhai farm and fish.

Although each ethnic group speaks a separate language, nearly 80% of Malians communicate in Bambara, the common language of the marketplace. Malians enjoy a relative harmony rare in African states.

Malians express great pride in their ancestry. Mali is the cultural heir to the succession of ancient African empires—Ghana, Malinke, and Songhai—that occupied the West African savannah. These empires controlled Saharan trade and were in touch with Mediterranean and Middle Eastern centers of civilization.

The Ghana Empire, dominated by the Soninke people and centered in the area along the Malian-Mauritanian frontier, was a powerful trading state from about A.D. 700 to 1075. The Malinke Kingdom of Mali had its origins on the upper Niger River in the eleventh century. Expanding rapidly in the thirteenth century under the leadership of Soundiata Keita, it reached its height about 1325, when it conquered Timbuktu and Gao. Thereafter, the kingdom began to decline, and by the fifteenth century, it controlled only a small fraction of its former domain.

The Songhai Empire expanded its power from its center in Gao during the period 1465-1530. At its peak under Askia Mohammad I, it encompassed the Hausa states as far as Kano (in present-day Nigeria) and much of the territory that had belonged to the Mali Empire in the west. It was destroyed by a Moroccan invasion in 1591.

French military penetration of the Soudan (the French name for the area) began around 1880. A French civilian governor of Soudan was appointed in 1893, but resistance to French control did not end until 1898, when the Malinke warrior Samory Toure was defeated after 7 years of war. The French attempted to rule indirectly, but in many areas they disregarded traditional authorities and governed through appointed chiefs. As part of the colony of Soudan, Mali was administered with other French colonial territories as the Federation of French West Africa.

In January 1959, Soudan joined Senegal to form the Mali Federation, which became fully independent within the French Community on June 20, 1960. The federation collapsed on August 20, 1960, when Senegal seceded. On September 22, Soudan proclaimed itself the Republic of Mali and withdrew from the French Community.

President Modibo Keita, whose party, the Union Soudanaise, had dominated preindependence politics, moved quickly to declare a single-party state and to pursue a socialist policy based on extensive nationalization. A continuously deteriorating economy
led to a decision to rejoin the Franc Zone in 1967 and modify some of the economic excesses.

On November 19, 1968, a group of young officers staged a bloodless coup and set up a 14-member Military Committee for National Liberation (CMLN), with Lt. Moussa Traore as president. The military leaders renounced socialism and attempted to pursue economic reforms.

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History of Nigeria

Early History

More than 2,000 years ago, the Nok culture in the present Plateau state worked iron and produced sophisticated terra cotta sculpture. In the northern cities of Kano and Katsina, recorded history dates back to approximately 1000 A.D. In the centuries that followed, these Hause kingdoms and the Bornu Empire near Lake Chad prospered as important terminals of trans-Saharan caravan routes. In the southwest, the Yoruba kingdom of Oyo was founded about 1400, and at its height--from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries--attained a high level of political organization. It encompassed a domain extending as far as modern Togo. In the south-central part of present-day Nigeria, as early as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the kingdom of Benin had developed an efficient army, an elaborate ceremonial court, and artisans whose works in ivory, wood, bronze and brass are prized throughout the world today.

From the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, the region was drawn into the web of the rapidly growing slave trade and other forms of trade with the European world.

In the early nineteenth century, the Fulani leader Usman dan Fodio launched an Islamic crusade that brought most of the Hausa states and other areas in the north under the loose control of an empire centered in Sokoto.

Colonization

In the late nineteenth century, British expanded their trade with the interior and claimed a sphere of influence. In 1900, the British government began to consolidate its hold over the area, and in 1914 it was formally declared the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria. Western education and economic practices proceeded more rapidly in the south than in the north where Islamic culture and political structures remained strong.

Independence

Following World War II, in response to the growth of Nigerian nationalism and demands for independence, successive constitutions legislated by the British Government moved Nigeria toward self-government on a representative, increasingly federal basis.

From the outset, Nigeria experienced ethnic, regional, and religious tensions, magnified by the significant disparities in economic and educational development between the south and the north. In 1966, a small group of army officers, mostly Ibos, overthrew the government and assassinated the prime minister. A counter-coup by Gen. Yakubu Gowan led to massacres of thousands of Ibos who had migrated to the north. In 1967, the Ibo leaders declared the "Republic of Biafra," leading to a bloody civil war which ended in the defeat of Biafra in 1970.

Following the civil war, reconciliation was rapid and effective. The country turned to the task of economic development. The oil boom of the 1970s shifted Nigeria from an agriculturally based economy to one that now relies on oil for more than 95% of export earnings and 70% of federal budget resources. The greater opportunities made possible by the oil boom induced massive rural-urban migration, which has had a devastating impact on agriculture.

The country has experienced severe economic difficulties since 1982 because of a dramatic fall in export revenues and heavy debt service payments.

After military rule during the 1970s, a Constituent Assembly was elected in 1977 to draft a new constitution. An elected government served from 1979-83 when the Second Republic was overthrown by the military, partly as a result of the severe economic problems. By the early 1990s, steps were being made to restore democratic government, but has not yet succeeded.

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History of Senegal

by Dr. Antony Hobbs

Archaeological findings suggest that the area was inhabited in prehistoric times. Tukulor people settled here before the tenth century A.D. They converted to Islam in the eleventh century, though traditional beliefs were retained in Senegal well into the nineteenth century.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to reach Senegal in 1444. Later in the following order came other Europeans (2) Dutch (3) English (4) French. These Europeans came first as traders or merchants with the Africans along this African coast.

The French established a trading post on the coast of African in 1738 and gradually extended their commercial and military power inland. Because the Europeans had superior military power to the Africans they were able to take control of the lives of the Africans of Senegal. This control over the lives of the Africans of Senegal was alternated between France and England from 1693 to 1814. Senegal became a French overseas territory in 1946 and an autonomous republic within the French community in 1958.

In April 1959, Senegal and French Sudan (now Mali) formed the Mali Federation. But Senegal withdrew in 1960 and declared itself an independent republic with a parliamentary democracy. Leopold Senghor, an internationally renowned poet and statesman, was elected Senegal's first president in 1960.

Major ethnic groups of Senegal are the Wolof, Fulani, Sefer and Tukulor, each with a different language. About a third of the total population are Wolof. French is the official language, but the majority of the people speak Wolor and other African languages. There are some Europeans, Syrians and Lebanese, who reside in the cities. About 90% of the population follows Islam.

More than a third of the people are urban and live in towns such as Sakar, Thies, Kaolack, Ziguinchor and Saint Louis. About three-fourths of the urban population lives in the Dakar metropolitan area; situated in the Southern Cape Verde peninsula. Dakar is a modern city with residential suburbs.

Education is compulsory between the ages of 6 to 12. Religious schools provide Islamic education for boys. Vocational training offered at special institutes prepares skilled craftsmen and technicians. The University of Dakar, founded in 1957, is the country's principal institution of higher learning. Senegal has a considerable range of medical facilities, but they are largely concentrated in the cities.

Senegal is primarily an agricultural country. Agriculture, livestock and fishing are the major sectors of the economy. Peanuts are the major cash crop, occupying about 40% of the total area under cultivation and providing a large percentage of total export earnings. The cultivation of cotton, rice, sugarcane and vegetables is encouraged to reduce the country's economic dependence on peanuts. Other crops, including millet, sorghum, cassave, beans, sweet potatoes and rice are produced for domestic use. Livestock is raised in most of the country but is more prevalent in the north.

Exports also include crude petroleum, machinery, cereals, chemicals and transportation equipment. Chief exports are petroleum products, calcium phosphate, peanut oil, canned, fresh and frozen fish.

Major items produced are textiles, cement, soft drinks, canned fish, shoes and cigarettes. There are also ship-repairing, peanut oil extracting and sugar refining plants. Tourism has become a major source of foreign revenue. Traditional handcrafts including leather products, wood working, basket and cloth weaving, and jewelry making are popular.

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6. Exploring Sources of African History

contributions by Dr. Rich Corby

Subject:

Social Studies and economics

Overview:

Students will explore African history sources and learn to detect bias in sources.

Objectives:

1. To learn major sources of African history information and problems in interpreting each type.
2. To begin to ask critical questions about sources of information.
3. To select sources of information for their own projects.
4. To compare several contemporary secondary sources and to discuss possible reasons for discrepancies and possible problems of accuracy in secondary sources.

Materials Needed:

Timeline handout and country history handouts from Lesson 5
Handouts 6-1, 6-2, 6-3
"Olodengbe's Drummers" from Literature Lesson (an oral history example)

Activities:

Activity 1: Using Primary Sources to Learn History

1. Divide the class into groups. If students are doing country research projects, use the existing groups. Give each group one of the samples of history sources. Have students go back to the African history documents and get out their timelines. Have them locate each of the documents on the timeline and by ethnic group.

2. Have each group examine its source to find out what they can tell about their own history from the source. Explain the terms "fact" and "inference." Explain that a fact is something that can be proven. An inference is a good guess based on a fact. Have each group make a list of the facts they can find in their document and then list the inferences they can make from the facts. Ask them to use their inference skills to make a list of the kinds of occupations that must have existed in the society.

Activity 2: Don't Believe Everything You Hear

1. Bring a copy of a particularly outlandish story from a tabloid. Ask students how many believe it. Ask students why they do or do not believe the story. Ask students to give their reasons and list on the board the criteria they are using to decide whether something is true or not. (It wouldn't be easy to fake. I believe the person who said it. etc.)

2. Point out that much of the "information" they have received on Africa may be just as untrustworthy as the tabloid. Point out that movies and television shows have been particularly inaccurate in portraying Africa, and that even library books, textbooks and encyclopedias can not always be trusted to have accurate information about Africa. Ask

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students if they remember reading or seeing anything about Africa that was probably inaccurate such as Tarzan movies and cartoons.

3. Point out that it is even harder to find out the truth about the past, and that it is particularly difficult in West African history because few written materials are available from before the fifteenth century. Most of the early sources are in Arabic and have not been translated or are not available in the U.S. Many of the European written sources were very prejudiced because they wanted to support slavery or to prove the need for Christianity. There is probably much more possible information available from archeology, but archaeologists and historians have not studied West Africa as thoroughly as other places. Also, wooden structures in rainforests do not preserve easily.

4. Pass out the handouts of African history primary sources. Explain that information about West African history has been gathered from many sources. Many of these sources are not completely reliable. Explain that the following kinds of sources are available on West African history. Ask students to try to figure out what the problems might be for each kind of source. Ask them to identify which type each of the samples is.

-Type One: Archaeological materials such as tombs, ruins of cities, or objects—people (Problem: People often have to guess at the interpretations.)

-Type Two: Oral history. Stories and history passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation (Problem: People may change the stories to make them more exciting or to fit current interests, or they may remember them wrong.)

-Type Three: Written reports from travelers. Travelers may not have understood the culture very well. Travelers typically describe the strange and unusual. Europeans writing about Africa were often writing propaganda to justify slavery or colonization or to raise money for church missions. They tended to emphasize horror stories.

5. Divide students into groups and have them rank the sources in order of which is most reliable. Let students share their judgments about the reliability of the different documents.

You might do a chart comparing what makes the document trustworthy and what makes it untrustworthy.

6. Have students look at the sources of information they have available in their school which might include computer programs, books, magazines, and textbooks. Have them discuss how much they can trust each of these sources.

Activity 3: Using Secondary Sources

Explain that secondary sources are materials that people wrote based on primary sources. The writer may have gotten all of his information from the library and never have been to the country. Secondary sources usually do not give you much information about the quality of information and bias of the writer. The timelines and country histories from Lesson 5 are examples of secondary sources. The U.S. Department of State Background Notes selected information that would be of interest to U.S. business and political leaders. An African writer might have selected different information or described things a little differently. Look at the colonial period. Rewrite the sentences where Europeans are the subject or actor to make the Africans the subject. Does this change your impression of what happened?

Compare the histories on the timeline with the country histories and with the primary source documents. Also compare accounts in history texts to encyclopedias. What differences do you see, if any? What might be reasons for differences? For example, don Fodio's first name is pronounced Uthman in one language and Usman in another.

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Handout 6-1
Sample African History Sources

Archaeological Evidence

Evidence from digging up ruins from the past

The Burial at Igbo-Ukwu

Igbo-Ukwu is located east of the Niger River in Nigeria in the area which the Ibo people now inhabit.

At this site, a burial mound has been found which has been dated at before 1,000 A.D. by radiocarbon tests.

The burial mound includes:

-a skull

-hundreds of copper and bronze objects including anklets, straps, handles, a bronze leopard's skull.

-thousands of stone and glass beads

-elephant tusks

-iron nails and staples

-a number of bones of wild, edible animals

Historians and archaeologists think that this site provides evidence of trade with the Mediterranean world and a wealthy ruler.

*Information summarized from African Civilizations by Graham Connah, Cambridge University Press, 1987.

African Oral History

The Epic of Sundiata

This is an excerpt from a long poem passed down by griots, oral historians who were trained through years of study to remember their stories. This version was told by Ali Sawse in the Gambia. The events in this story took place in about the twelfth century in Mali.

Sunjata's mother was Sira Nyading, and his father was Suxlu Nyamadu, who was the ruler of Manding. The capital town of this country was Pai Kawraw...

When Sunjata was about six he gathered together all the hunters in the district. He instructed them not to shoot a lion with a white spot on his forehead, for that lion was Sunjata. Their bullets could not hurt him, but if they shot at him he would kill them.

In Harold Courlander's *A Treasury of African Folklore.* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1975)

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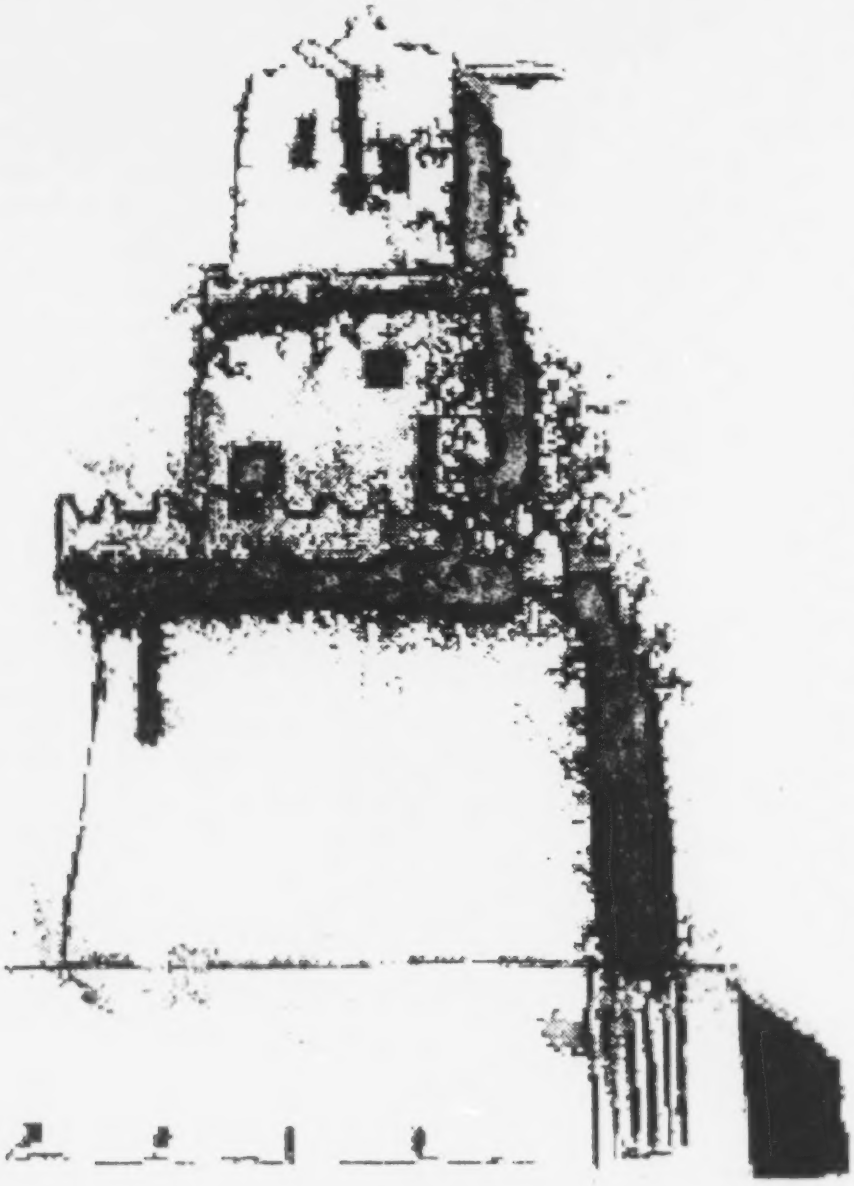
Handout 6-2
Gobiran Mosque



Katsina City, Nigeria
The mosque was built in the fifteenth century at a time when the Hausa Kingdoms had strong ties with Songhai.

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Handout 6-3
Information from Arabic Writings

The Travel Writings of
Shams al-Din Abu Abd Allah Muhammad Ibn Battuta

Ibn Battuta was born at Tangier in 1304 A.D. and traveled through most of the Muslim world. In this section, he describes his impressions of Mali under Sultan Mansa Sulayman.

One of their good features is their lack of oppression. They are the farthest removed of people from it and their sultan does not permit anyone to practice it. Another is the security embracing the whole country, so that neither traveller there nor dweller has anything to fear from thief or usurper....Another is their assiduity in prayer and their persistence in performing it in congregation and beating their children to make them perform it. If it is a Friday and a man does not go early to the mosque he will not find anywhere to pray because of the press of the people. Another is their eagerness to memorize the great Koran. They place fetters on their children if there appears on their part a failure to memorize it and they are not undone until they memorize it.

From p. 296 of Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History by Levtzion & Hopkins. Used by permission of Cambridge University Press.

Information from Europeans

British Missionary Writings about the Ibo

Excerpts from reports of J.C. Taylor of the British Church Missionary Society at Onitsha in Ibo country in Nigeria.

On Sunday, August 11, 1859... I arrived at the Mission House in time for service. I was delighted to see so many native boys and girls dressed in the English style, came forward with much confidence and saluted me with "Good Morning Sir," at the same time making a curtsy as they retired and took their seats in the Church.

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Resource List—Lessons 5 and 6

Video Series - *Africa: A Voyage of Discovery* with Basil Davidson

This series contains a wealth of information. For middle school students it is probably best broken down into ten-20 minute segments. For information about the series ask your local video store or call 1-800-262-8600 or write Home Vision, Box 800, Concord MA 01742

Programs 1 and 2 emphasize East and Central Africa.
Most teachers will be unable to use them because of extensive nudity.
Selections from Program 1 show how images of Africa were distorted by Europeans, primarily because of the slave trade.

Program 3: Caravans of Gold
Davidson traces the routes of the medieval gold trade which reached from Africa to India and China and Italy. The kingdom of Ghana was described in 951 as the wealthiest on earth.

Program 4: Kings and Cities
Davidson visits Kano in Nigeria where a king still holds court in his 15th century palace. Shows praise singers, use of Islamic law, and Fulani and Hausa cultures.

Program 5: The Bible and The Gun
Describes European interests in Africa for slaves and the way slavery influenced European attitudes toward Africans. Conquest of South Africa.

Program 6: This Magnificent African Cake
Describes trading partnerships between Europeans and Africans in West Africa and the drive for empire of the Europeans in the late 1880s. Resistance to the European invasions. Comparison of British rule in Kenya with many white settlers to Nigeria with few white settlers. French rule and efforts at assimilation. Brief descriptions of Belgian and Portuguese colonies.

Program 7: The Rise of Nationalism
Begins with World War II and Africans fighting in European wars. Africans begin expressing grievances. Describes Kwame Nkrumah and the independence of Ghana and the struggles for independence in Kenya, Algeria, and Zaire and the forming of the Organization of African Unity.

Program 8: The Legacy
The program opens with parliament in Nigeria and the problems left in Africa after colonialism. Describes economic issues, corruption in African governments, environmental problems and the Biafran conflict.

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Part 3
How An African Community Works

In the next few lessons, students will learn about the values and organization of West African communities by studying major events in a West African's life.

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7. How Do I Know Who I Am?

Contributions by Dr. Olufunmilayo Amobi, Shirley Ferguson, Delores Massey, Barbara Johnson, Suzanne Anthony, Charlotte Simmonds-Hammons, Zinse Agginie, Eze Nwoji and Gao Juwen

Subject:

English, social studies and family living

Overview:

In this lesson students will participate in a dramatization of a naming ceremony. Analysis of the ceremonies surrounding these events will help students understand major West African beliefs and values.

Objectives:

1. To explore the way naming customs show values and relationships in a culture.
2. To understand naming customs of several West African cultures and the beliefs and values they illustrate.
3. To understand the naming ceremony of the Yoruba and its significance.
4. To use naming activities to build community within the classroom.

Materials and Preparation Needed:

Handouts 7-1, 7-2, 7-3, 7-4 and 7-5

Doll for baby, three bowls, salt, pepper, honey and calabash for money

Paper for name tags

Activities:

Activity 1: How We Develop Identity

1. Ask students to discuss how a person develops his identity. Put your name (or the name of a prominent person) in the center of the blackboard. Ask students how much they can tell about a person from his or her name. (They may have some clues about race or ancestry—but usually not much else.)

2. Ask students what questions they would ask someone when they first meet to get an idea of who they are. What other things would they try to find out—even though they might not ask them? List those around the edges of the name. Do a mind-map showing all of the components of your identity.

3. Assign students to do a mind map, or a poem or collage that explores their identity. Have them share their productions with other members of the group. If your class as a whole needs more getting-acquainted opportunities, have students share their production with the whole class.

Activity 2: Developing Identity in Africa

Explain to students the importance of names in West Africa, that giving a child a name is part of the process of entering the world as a person.

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The Yoruba naming ceremony is performed by the oldest man in the family. All of the relatives will be invited: There might be 500 people present. Girls are named on the seventh day after birth and boys on the eighth. Each name describes a situation of the family at that time. All names are sentences of inspiration which determine what a child will be.

Activity 3: Dramatization

1. Have students act out the drama script. (Note: If you are using groups, you might assign the Yoruba group the drama ahead of time and have them prepare the main parts and bring the props.)

2. Discuss the naming ceremony.
   What values or aspirations for the child did the family demonstrate?
   What values or wishes did the objects placed on the child indicate?
   How is the naming ceremony similar to the naming of a child in your country?
   How is it different? Note how strong the emphasis on the family is for the child's identity. The child is named for his or her role in the family—not for his or her personal qualities.
   What could you tell about an African child from his or her name that you might not be able to tell from a name in your country? How does the name relate to a person's identity?

Activity 4: Selecting an African name

Have students get into their ethnic groups and hand out the study sheets on names of various groups. Have the oldest person in each group assign an appropriate name for each member of the group. For the Yoruba and Ibo, the name might signify what the elder hopes the person could contribute to the group. Have students make name tags with their new names which they will use for the rest of the unit.

Activity 5: Making Comparisons

1. Have the class come together and have each group present a report on how people are named in their culture and introduce each person using his or her African name.

2. Discuss the similarities and differences between the African naming ceremonies and naming ceremonies here. Do you see any elements of African naming ceremonies in our naming traditions?

3. Some African Americans are going back to African names and naming customs. If any students have names of African origin or have family members with African names, encourage them to share why their family wanted to use African names, how they selected the name, and how they feel about it.

Activity 6: Novel Reading Assignment

Have students make a chart of the names of the characters in their novels. Have them give the meaning of the name if it is either on their chart or told in the book. Have students do an identity mind-map for a major character in their book. Is the character's identity any different than it would be if he or she were an American?

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Activity 7: Historical Fiction Assignment

Create the main characters for your story or play. Carefully select appropriate names. Do a mind-map for your characters. Be sure to include in your mind-map the kinds of things that Africans consider important as well as the things Americans consider important.

Activity 8: Portfolio Assignments

1. Write a poem or do a collage on the theme "Who Am I?"
2. Write a poem or do a college on the theme "Who Am I" using your African name and African principles of forming identity.

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Handout 7-1a
Yoruba Naming Ceremony

Characters:

Narrator 1
Narrator 2
Father
Patriarch
Mother (no speaking part)

Narrator 1: You are our extended family. Following Yoruba custom, we invite you to participate in the naming ceremony for our child. Please, men, raise your arms and ladies, applaud when we indicate.

Narrator 2: The naming ceremony begins early in the morning. They want to name the baby early in the day. Girls are named on the seventh day; boys, on the eighth day. Family and friends gather at the home of the infant. Our child is male. There may be hundreds of people at the ceremony.

Narrator 1: The naming ceremony is the traditional way of welcoming the baby to the family, one of the most important events in the life of the person. Names are very important among the Yoruba.

Narrator 2: Through a name it is possible to know many things about the family circumstances: religious beliefs, values, aspirations of the family and family relationships.

Narrator 1: The mother hands the baby to the patriarch of the family who will obtain the name of our son from the father. As the name is given, please respond as I earlier asked.

Father: (whispers names to the patriarch): Omoaiyé (Oh-moh-AYE-yeh) Olóríegbé (Oh-low-ree-EGG-bee).

Patriarch: Welcome to you, family and friends, at this great occasion. This is a joyous gathering. We are very happy for the addition of a new healthy son to carry the name of this family. Today, this family has invited all of us to rejoice with them and to welcome this child to the world (indicates by lifting hands). Now, everyone please rise and let us pray for this gift from God.

O Lord God, we thank you for this new baby. We pray that he may live a long, prosperous and healthy life. This family has been a successful family, and may this child carry the torch and bring more honor and prosperity to the name of this family.

Everyone: Amen

Patriarch: Omoaiyé

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Handout 7-1b

Everyone: Yea! (audience responds)

Narrator 1: The meaning of the first name of the child is "child of the world." Our family is concerned about world unity, wanting the child to grow up with a global perspective.

Patriarch: Olóríegbé

Everyone: Yea!

Narrator 2: The meaning of the second name is "leader of his peers." Our family aspires that the child will grow to be a leader of men.

The audience cheers to signify the admission of the baby as a person. Among the Yorubas, if a child should die before his naming ceremony, it would be considered to have never existed. Such is the significance of the naming ceremony as an important event in a person's life.

Patriarch: (performs naming ceremony)

Narrator 1: The patriarch touches the bowl of salt with his right index finger and places his finger on the tip of the baby's tongue.

Patriarch: Omoaiyé Olóríegbé, we use salt in the world to make our food taste good. May your life be as useful as this salt.

Narrator 2: The patriarch touches the bowl of honey and places his finger on the tip of the baby's tongue.

Patriarch: Omoaiyé Olóríegbé, honey is the sweetness of life. May your life be as sweet as honey. May you taste of all the joys of life.

Narrator 1: The patriarch touches the bowl of pepper with his right index finger and places his finger on the tip of the baby's tongue.

Patriarch: Omoaiyé Olóríegbé, pepper is the spice of life. May your life have spice, and may it be interesting and exciting. May you live to bear your name for a long, long time.

Narrator 2: The patriarch hands the baby over to the mother. Each member of the audience goes over to the mother to congratulate her and to place coins/money in the calabash.

Narrator 1: Following the formal naming ceremony, the feast begins, with festive activities including music, dancing, and eating.

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Handout 7-2
Yoruba Naming Customs

based on a lecture
by Dr. Olufunmilayo Amobi

The naming ceremony is very important. Before we name a child, we have to look at the circumstances of the family, the position of the child in the family, and their aspirations. When a baby is born, messages are sent to the whole family and all make suggestions for the baby's name.

Yoruba names often signify important events in the family or relationships. Some children come with names. The first born of twins is called Taiwo or "first to taste the world." The second of twins is called Kéhìndé. A child that follows twins will be called Idowu and the child following Idowu will be called Alaba.

Sometimes a child is believed to be the reincarnation of a dead ancestor. For example, if a grandfather died, a male child could be named Babatunde or "Father has come back." If a grandmother died, the name could be named "Yetunde" or "Iya bode," "Mother has come back."

There used to be high infant mortality in Nigeria. The Yoruba believed that there were some children that come and go. Abiku is the generic name fror these children. If two children die, they may name a boy Durosimi-- "Mother begs the child to outlive me and bury me." Another abiku name is Duro Jaiye, "wait and enjoy life." Or you may call a child a bad name so it is ashamed to go back to the spirit world. Some children are given religious names like Olu/ funmilayo which means God/ has given me joy. Olu, or God, means the family is religious and may be Christian.

At the naming ceremony, all members of the family come and the oldest member of the family offers libations to the dead who are also invited. Living and dead in the family are integrated--we are all one. Pepper symbolizes the spice of life; salt, the salt of life; and honey, the sweetness of life.

Some Yoruba names and their meanings:

Ébùn	Gift
Bósèdé	Born on Sunday
Oyin	Honey
Olá	Wealth
Nike	A child is to be petted
Iyábò	Mother has come back.
Dupe	I am thankful
Ewà	Beauty

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Handout 7-3a
Some Common African Names from Ghana and Togo

by Zinse Agginie

The naming and outdooring of a child takes place before sun up. Relatives from both sides of the family including elders and some friends will gather at the home. Drinks and refreshments will be served. Some well-to-do families may slaughter a goat and have special meals prepared. The naming ceremony which includes a libation for good health, respect and obedience and observation of the society rules and norms will precede the feasting. Part of the ceremony may include lifting the child and showing him/her three times to the heavens. People will be expected to put on their good clothes for this occasion, but for the child and mother, pretty clothes made from white cloth are normal.

Day Names are the first names which individuals among the Akan and Ewe ethnic groups select for offspring. These names indicate the particular day of birth. Other names will be given later, usually on the seventh day when the child is brought out of doors. Such names are invariably given by the elders on the father's side of the family. The second name will be a name that relates to the clan and may have connotations of the special experiences of the clan. The father is usually offered a group of such names from which to select. Later a father or mother may give the child a special pet name.

Twin children, if they are male, may be called Akwete (the older one) and Akwetteh (the younger one.) They may also be called Zinsu and Zinse or Asu and Seh. This is particularly among the Ewes. If they are female, they may be called Akwele and Akworkor. The first child born after a set of twins may be called Tawiah and the next one Ago. Both of these names are given regardless of gender.

This ceremony and selection of names may vary from place to place. In Ghana, the Accra people or Ga people do not use day names, for instance. In other parts of West Africa there may be differences, but among the Ewes of Togo and Ghana and among the Akans of Ghana, these names are fairly typical.

(Pronunciation of some of the names is given underneath in parentheses. Pronounce the others phonetically.)

EWE DAY NAMES

Day	Male Names	Female Names
Monday (Dzodagbe)	Kojo/Kojovi (Kor-JOE)	Adjoa/Adjoavi
Tuesday (Bladagbe)	Kobla/Koblavi (Kor-BLAH)	Abla/Ablavi

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Handout 7-3b

Wednesday (Kudagbe)	Koku/Kwaku (Kor-KOO)	Aku/Akua
Thursday (Yoadagbe)	Ayao/Yao	Ayorvi
Friday (Fidagbe)	Kofi/Kofidze (Ko-FEE)	Afi/Afua (Ah—FEE, A-FWA)
Saturday	Kwame/Kwamivi (Kwa-MAY)	Ama/Amavi (A-MAH)
Sunday (Kosidagbe)	Kossi/Kossivi	Akosua

Akan Day Names

Monday Dwoada	Kwadjo	Adjoa
Tuesday Benada	Kwabena	Abena
Wednesday Wukuada	Kwaku	Akua
Thursday Yawoada	Yaw	Yaa
Friday Fiada	Kofi	Afua
Saturday Memeneda	Kwame	Amma
Sunday Kwasiada	Kwasi	Akosua

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Handout 7-4
Naming Ceremony Among the Manding
by Dr. Rich Corby

Among the Manding, the naming ceremony takes place the third day after the birth. A griot (gree' oh) recites the history of the family. Griots are singers and poets who memorize family histories and perform them in traditional ways. The family takes up a collection for the griot. If they contribute enough, the griot may remember only the good things about the family's past.

Names for females:

Fatmata	Hawa	Kadiatu
Fanta	Mariamma	Sophiatu

Names for males:

Abu Bakr	Amadu	Mustapha
Foday	Ali	Musa

Last names:

Turay	Sesay	Kamara
Koulabi	Kouyate	Daramy
Mansaray	Conteh	Korama

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Handout 7-5
Ibo Naming Customs

Eze Nwoji and Gao Juwen

Ibo names usually have significant meanings. A name may be related to past events and express a wish to a child's future. For example, Ozoemena means "do not repeat." A child is named Ozoemena because his previous brothers or sisters died of an illness, and his parents would not like the tragedy to happen again.

A child may be named after the place where the child is born. For example, Nwanyi Ugbo means "born on a train."

A name can be a blessing from parents. Obiageli is an example. It literally means that a child has come to eat. Parents wish that this child be born rich, that he is not required to work at all, and that he just eat.

A name can also indicate on which day the child is born. The day that all other days refer to is the market day. For example, Okonkwo means a man is born on Nkwo Market Day.

Parents sometimes express their interests or favors in their children's names. For example, Ikpegibunma means money is good. More frankly, Egonwamne means mother loves money.

Children may also be named after their ancestors. Ibos believe that there is after-life. Dead persons can come back to life when a new baby is born. So a boy may be named after his great-grandfather, because the parents think the grandfather has come back to life again.

The following are some Ibo names from Things Fall Apart:

Akueke: riches of Eke market
Akunna: father's wealth
Amadiora: god of thunder
Amalinze: pride of being a chief
Chika: God is great
Egonwanne: mother loves money
Ezeugo: king of birds
Ezinma: nice compound
Ikemefuna: fear of being weak
Mgboafo: a name associated with Afo market day
Nkechi: god's own
Nna ayi: our father
Nneka: mother is supreme
Nwakibie: some sons are greater than others
Nwoye: a son born on Orie market day
Obiageli: born to eat (born rich)
Obiako: deceiving mind
Obierika: a greater mindobodoani—hometown
Ogbuefi: killer of cows
Okonkwo: a man born on Nkwo market day

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8. Marriage and Family Life

Contributions by Zinse Aginnie, Erma Franks and Olufunmilayo Amobi

Subjects:

English, social studies and home economics

Overview:

Students will act out a drama about marriage in Ghana and will read male and female perspectives on marriage customs in West Africa.

Objectives:

1. Students will gain respect and appreciation for a culture different from their own.
2. Students will be able to discuss and debate polygamy without ridicule and with recognition of the role it plays in African cultures.
3. Students will note similarities and differences in marriage customs in their culture with that of other cultures.
4. Students will discuss the effect of marriage customs in a country on other aspects of life.
5. Students will compare male and female perspectives on marriage customs.

Materials and Preparations Needed:

Handouts 8-1, 8-2, 8-3

Guest speaker. This is a good topic to invite a guest speaker from Africa or someone who has livedthere.

Activities:

Activity 1: Dramatization

1. Have students act out the dramatization of a marriage in Ghana. If you are having students work in groups, you might have members of the Akan group prepare the dramatization in advance—calling on other groups if they need more actors.

2. After the drama, discuss the following questions:

a. What does the family consider important in deciding who the daughter should marry? How do these compare to the things Americans consider in choosing someone to marry?

b. Who makes the decision about marriage? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

Activity 2. Multiple Perspectives

1. Give students the handouts "A Man's Perspective on Marriage in Ghana" and "A Woman's Perspective on Marriage Among the Yoruba." Before they begin reading, ask them to define perspective. They should recognize it means point of view. Ask them if a man and a woman usually see a marriage differently. Ask them for some examples of men and women seeing a relationship differently from their experience.

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Have them read the two passages. Have students compare marriage in the two African groups, then compare both groups with American marriages. Compare the man's view with the woman's view and African view with American view.

Then have students discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the extended family vs. the nuclear family and the advantages and disadvantages of polygamy, comparing male and female perspectives. You may want to have students do a formal debate on the topic. You may also want to have students discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a male-dominated society.

Activity 3: Research

Have students research marriage customs and family life in the group that they are studying using the handouts, through the novel study guides, through library research or through guest speakers.

Optional Activities:

1. Have students prepare a product to demonstrate what they have learned. They may:
   - —Write a paper giving details of family life.
   - —Role play a particular ceremony such as the initial contact between prospective marriage partners.
   - —Write a short story about family life.
   - —Role play a marriage or romance scene from the novel they are reading.
2. After students have completed and reported on their research, divide the class into four groups. Each group will represent an extended family with a prospective bride or groom. Each group will compile a list of credentials that a prospective mate should have. Then have the groups role play the initial contact between the two families.
3. Discuss similarities and differences between family life in the United States and in West Africa. Have any features of African family life survived in African American culture?

Fiction Activity: If students are writing plays or short stories

Assign students to analyze the family relationships of their characters. Have them develop scenes of family life which accurately reflect what they have learned in this lesson.

At this point, you might want to have groups share their emerging stories with one other group. Have the second group critique the authenticity of their story based on the handouts.

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Handout 8-1a
A Marriage in West Africa

by Zinse Agginie

Cast of Characters:

Narrator	Amavi	First Man
Mother	Son	Second Man
Father	Dzifa	Brother

SCENE ONE:

Narrator: It is early evening at a village home just outside the city of Lome in Togo, West Africa. Father has returned from work, so has mother from the market where she runs a stall. All the children of the house are also at home. Father's other two wives are still at the market selling, not due back for another hour. Next week, one of them will replace Mother and be home early to cook for Father and the rest of the household.

Mother calls out to her youngest daughter, (she has three).

Mother: Amavi, your father has finished his meal. Go and clear up and prepare water for his bath. Tell him that I please want to talk with him after his bath.

Amavi responds and follows Mother's direction.

After his bath, Father as usual, relaxes in his long-backed chair at a corner of the compound. Mother approaches and sits in a stool Afi has thoughtfully placed in front of Father.

Mother: Togbigah (the wives' affectionate name for Father--it means Big Grand Father), are you there?

Father: Yes, take a seat. Is there a problem?

Mother: I just thought it was time you knew about the situation with Dzifa.

Father: Situation? What situation?

Mother: For sometime now, and this week especially, she has been spending too much time in the bookstore. I have talked with her and she has admitted being there because of the brother of her school friend.

Father: Hmm, maybe it is just what children of her age do, talk and spend time, especially now that school is out.

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Handout 8-1b

Mother: Yes, but I don't want her getting too involved with any boy now.

Father: Do you want me to talk with her?

Mother: Yes.

At this point Afi comes back and tells parents that they have visitors.

Father: Show them in.

Mother gets up and brings extra chairs, and then excuses herself. There are three visitors, two men and a woman. Father calls out to the oldest son to bring a calabash of water. He invites the visitors to sit. He pours a drop of water on the floor and then takes a sip after which he offers the calabash to the men. They take a sip in turn and then pass it on to the woman. Father asks Oldest Son to stay to be his mouthpiece. As an act of deference, the First Man likewise asks the Second Man to be spokesman.

Second Man: Greetings Togbigah, our way here was clear.

Father through Son: Greetings, you have stepped into a cool house. Pray what lies at the heels of your visit?

2nd Man: As you know we have always held your family in high regard. We are on an errand for our oldest brother whose son, our nephew has reached the age when he should marry. He has drawn his father's eyes to your daughter Dzifa and we think it is a good choice. We are here therefore to knock your door with this.....(he hands over a bag which out of respect is not opened there and then. Out of courtesy, he did not say that they had thoroughly checked Dzifa's background before today's approach.)

Father through Son: We thank you for your generosity and consideration. We too regard your family with great respect. We shall follow custom and send you a reply in due course.

1st Man: On that courteous note, we beg leave of you. Sleep well.

Early the next morning before Mother leaves for market, Father calls her and relays the purpose of the visit.

Mother: The moment I saw them I knew it was something like this!

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Handout 8-1c

Father: Are you against it?

Mother: No, I have great respect for that family but I had hoped that Dzifa would finish school and get into a profession, become a dokita (medical doctor) and then marry a big man!

Father: Leave off those big men. Today's big men are all crooks, remember that one that was recently ostracized.

Mother: Yes, do you mean the one who spent so many years in Europe?

Father: The very same! He whom now the community has disowned because of persistently breaking our rules. Anyway, I was not that Big when we married, in fact I did not even have a say in the matter. My father simply told me that he had found me a wife, you (with humour). Yet look how long we have been together.

Mother: Still, I did not want her married this early, during her last year at college. I want her to have one of those hand-holding marriages at the church.

Father: I will talk it over with my other two wives. You talk with Dzifa and your brothers and aunts.

That night, Father talked with the other wives, both of whom thought it was a good match which should proceed. Father's brother thinks the same too. He is impressed by the positive information he received from his research into the background of the groom and his family. One of Mother's brothers did not think so. He is concerned about old rumors that the wealth of the prospective groom's father had been acquired dubiously.

The groom's people had also done their check and evaluations before the initial approach. His mother did voice some concern over the lower social position of her son's prospective wife, but had been persuaded that it was more important for the man to have the higher position.

A month later, Father and his Brother met at Father's compound.

Brother: As upon the request of the family, I have talked to they that know the groom's family. I have done this and much more because your house is my house and my house yours. I will not let a wolf in sheep's skin join our flock!

Father: Pray, what did you learn, and may it be good.

Brother talked for a few minutes, stating how his research had taken him to three villages, one almost a couple of days journey away. He had traced the groom's family from this far away

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village, through the other two and had learned nothing but good things about his family. It would take a day to tell all the things he had heard. Suffice to say that no one in that family has ever suffered from epilepsy, madness or any of those feared illnesses. The men were very hardworking and the women very industrious. There is no scandal or any hint of disrepute attached to that family.

Brother: I strongly recommend that our daughter should marry this boy.

Two months later Father sends word to the groom's house to inform them that their intentions had received a favorable hearing and that they were welcome to return for a formal reply and proceed.

(Father's compound a few months later.) Elders of the family, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters are waiting. The groom's elders and relatives arrive. Today is the day to officially ask for Dzifa's hand in marriage to their son. They give and receive customary courtesies. After this, the groom's parents present the bride with a small sewing machine, two 12-yard pieces of fine cloth, seven guineas, three bottles of drink, a cow and a ring. (These gifts vary from place to place. They are given to demonstrate capability to maintain and provide for a home. What is given depends on the groom's wealth, but more so on the social station of the bride.) Dzifa's hand is now officially given to the groom, Libation is poured to bless the uniting of the two families. An elder gives general advice. The marriage is now official. There is feasting, drumming and dancing.

Note: This play represents a customary or traditional marriage in one African society. Africa is a big continent of almost 800 million people, and customs vary from place to place, sometimes in great detail.

Besides customary marriages, there are two other ways of marriage--the church wedding and the Registry Office marriage, either of which includes some paper documentation as part of the proceedings. Sometimes a couple may decide to go through a Church wedding after their traditional marriage.

Those who are responsible for pregnancy out of wedlock are subject to stiff fines.

If the groom already had a wife and wanted to marry a second or any additional one, he would require cooperation from the present wife. Then he must perform a ceremony which literally means "removing" the woman's sole right to the marital bed. This is symbolic and consists of giving the present wife a gift of sorts.

Divorce comes only after a lot of counseling from both sides of the family by experienced elders.

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Handout 8-2a
A Man's Perspective on Marriage in Ghana

Based on a lecture by Zinse Agginie

In Ghana as in most of West Africa, there are three kinds of marriages: The traditional or customary marriage, the Register Office or Church marriage and marriage performed according to the Islamic faith. Invariably, Register Office or Church weddings are the choice of most Christians whereas Islamic marriages are for Moslems.

Most marriages are the result of meeting, falling in love and courtship. In some cases, marriages result from arrangements made between families. Because a marriage is the union of both the groom's and bride's families, elders from either side have influence over the marriage. Each side to some extent checks the other and sometimes objections may lead to overruling the choice made by the primary couple. It must be stressed that the free will or desires of both the boy and the girl are respected and either can ignore or accept the advice of the family regarding the appropriateness of their choice. Factors taken into account may include the social and economic standing of the family, profession, diseases and other family history.

Church or Registry office marriages which are Euro-centric in origin and practice, are more common in the urban areas where it is the preference of most Christians, professionals, academics and other urban elite. Traditional or customary marriage is the choice of Africans who adhere more to the traditions of the culture. These couples may be rural or even urban folk, even Christians who at a later date when enough money has been saved, may add a Christian ceremony.

Traditional or customary marriage is not certified or documented in a register, only recorded on the minds of the people of the community. The requirements leading to a traditional marriage are more stringent and it can be argued that the traditional marriage has proven to be a more stable institution. The rate of divorce is much smaller than in the European-oriented marriages, although in all marriages, people are slow to divorce. Divorce is a very serious step, a great embarrassment to both families and every effort is made by elders from both sides to rectify things.

There is no particular legal mechanism for deciding custody of children after dissolution of the traditional marriage. The very young children, especially girls, will stay with the mother and the older boys with the father. In some cases, depending upon circumstances, the children will all stay with relations of one side. The extended family is concerned with the welfare of the children and discourages alienation of children from parents. Custody battles are virtually unknown. Joint custody is taken for granted in these situations. Fathers ensure some support as a duty and also for the sake of the reputation of their families. If need be, and everything has failed, a mother can seek redress from the court of the traditional chief. This process may continue upwards as far as the paramount chief until satisfaction is received.

Polygyny is a feature of life in West Africa, and present in both Islamic and traditional marriages. The reasons for polygyny are complex and age-old. In the old days it supported the agrarian culture by increasing the amount of labor a family could call on since work on the farm was labor-intensive. Farms were and still are family-held properties and more wives mean more offspring and increased labor output. In this way a family utilizes its own members and

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refrains from hiring outside labor. This helps to keep the wealth of the family within the group.

In the African context, adultery means relations outside a marriage whether or not the marriage is monogamous or includes more than one wife. Adultery attracts grave concerns and persistence can result in ostracization from the community, a very drastic consequence, especially in the rural community.

Children are very important to the family and the addition of a second wife may result from the infertility of the first wife. In cases where the first wife is unable to provide the family with a male child, for inheritance considerations and also because the male child carries on the family name, a husband may elect to take a second wife. Daughters get married to others and leave the home.

Polygyny is a serious institution, considered only by those who can socially and materially support their wives and children. Poorly-cared-for children and wives are a scandalous reflection on the man. To ensure peace and harmony in the home, a man has to have the cooperation of the present wife or wives before marrying an additional wife. Then he must perform a ceremony which literally means removing the first wife's sole right to the marital bed.

It is worth bearing in mind that traditional African society has had to interface with elements of western culture and the degree to which traditional values are observed and followed is greatly affected and often adulterated.

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Handout 8-3a
A Woman's Perspective on Marriage Among the Yoruba

based on a lecture by Dr. Olufunmilayo Amobi

The Yoruba are a fun-loving people who live in a very centralized culture. The village is headed by the Oba. The responsibility for the administration of family life is centralized. The head of the family is the oldest male.

Marriage is a very important institution. It is a union of two families--not two individuals. The marriage certificate is bride-wealth, which is a transfer of money from the family of the groom to the family of the bride. Bride-wealth can be cash. The family must also bring clothes and possibly a goat or cow or food item. The result is that both families have something invested in the marriage. If the marriage doesn't work, it is a shame on the whole family.

There is no marriage counselor or psychiatrist in Yoruba cultures. The family is the counselor. You don't talk about family things with outsiders. Whenever there is a problem, there have been family discussions on both sides.

Yoruba families may also be polygamous. The society used to be agrarian and lots of children are needed to run the farms. A person marries to have children, not for companionship. There is plenty of companionship in the family. Marriage is to expand the size of the extended family because a large family creates security.

Polygamy is a complex issue. We have a saying, "No house is big enough for two women." Women don't really like polygamy, but tradition compels women to accept it. There is usually a lot of dissent in a polygamous home. A man has to be a good manager if he has more than one wife. He needs to enforce seniority and be fair about how he shares his time. Women should also have a trade so they are out of the house part of the time. In a polygamous family there is usually competition among mother and children against others.

Yoruba woman may not have a choice about whether her husband takes a second wife. The family may find a second wife if the first is barren.

The extended family is a whole network of family members or clan. It is a patrilineal clan with a single male ancestor. There is no word for cousin, niece, nephew, uncle and aunt in Yoruba. Everyone is sister, brother, mother and father.

Clan is important. You are identified with the clan and derive support from the clan. If things go well, you rejoice together. If there is trouble, you get support. Nobody stands alone. No matter where you are, you take your clan. Even in the U.S., Yoruba form associations. You are not what you are, you are what your clan is.

Whatever you do, you are always second-guessing, will I represent the clan well?

When you meet other Nigerians, they ask "Have you heard from home?" not "How is your job?"

For the first five years of a child's life, the mother is responsible. Yoruba women establish bonds with their children. The baby is carried on the mother's back. The mother sleeps with the baby. She is always with the baby for the first five years. Some research shows this is valuable for the developmental process.

After the child is five years old, training will be done by the whole clan. The child belongs to everyone—grandparents, uncles and aunts. The family teaches the child how to greet.

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Handout 8-3b

Greeting is very important. We have a greeting for every occasion. There is a proper greeting for everything and the child must learn them. They must show respect for elders. The child must have a lot of education before s/he goes to school. Yoruba can forgive illiteracy, but someone without home training cannot be forgiven.

The child must learn other rules of courtesy. The right hand is the eating hand, the clean hand. The left hand is the dirty hand. If you give something with your left hand, that is an insult.

Daughters learn to cook. A Nigerian woman knows her place. Her place is that of wife and mother. God has given her reponsibilities. Yoruba women are very enterprising. They work as pilots, magistrates and engineers. They have equal pay, but are not pushy. However, a woman does not define herself by her position or profession. She is defined by her place as wife and mother.

Society is decidedly male-oriented and most women are happy with it. Men derive strength from wife and family. Men in Yoruba society are pampered and sheltered by mothers and wives. A woman has to build up a man and likes to pamper him.

This is the traditional way and it has endured over the years--but with introduction of western and urban civilization a lot of things are changing.

In the old days, you couldn't marry another ethnic group. Before western education the expectations of clan overrode love or romance. But then you stayed in your own homes and didn't have a chance to meet a lot of other people.

Divorce is now more common. Dowry has changed, but it is still uncommon to marry without dowry. Now young men and women are more independent and don't appreciate family, don't see need for family and become more individualistic. This creates lots of problems. Before, the Yoruba always thought "we." Now we think more "I."

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9. West African Courtesies and Values

contributions by Zinse Aggine, Eze Nwoji, and Gao Juwen

Subjects: Social studies and English

Overview:

Rules of courtesy play an important role in African society and are important in communicating with other cultures.

Objectives:

1. To recognize courtesy as one of the most important values of West Africans.
2. To understand several customs of courtesy.

Materials and Preparation:

Handouts--9-1, 9-2, 9-3

Activities:

Activity 1: Comparing Values

1. Have students rank the following qualities in their importance to friends or for a future husband or wife.

___ friendly
___ intelligent
___ good looking
___ has money
___ loyal
___ good family
___ talented
___ good manners

2. Discuss their rankings. Most people in the U.S. will rank good manners and good family fairly low. Ask students to discuss how the family in the drama in Lesson 8 would have ranked these qualities. Point out that the emphasis given various values is one of the ways that cultures differ. While Africans tend to value all these things, just as we do, they tend to rank good manners and good family background much higher than many other cultures do.

Activity 2: African Rules of Courtesy

Have students read the rules of courtesy handouts and the libation ceremony handout. While they are reading, hand out the role play assignments. Ask the class if they can recall where libation was used in the plays on naming and marriage. Have students compare the rules of courtesy among the Ibo with the examples of courtesy seen in the play from Ghana. How are they similar and how are they different?

Activity 3: Discussion

1. Ask the students who have been given the roles for role play one to act out their scene.

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After they finish, ask the class to discuss what happened. Which actor was following American rules of courtesy and which student was being rude? There may be some discussion of what proper courtesy rules are. If appropriate, you might ask students if there are different greeting customs among different ethnic groups or age groups.

2. Have students do the second role play. Compare the scene to the handout on Ibo greeting customs. How are their customs different?

3. Have students do role play three. Discuss what happened when people with different customs came together. How did the Ibo feel? How did the American feel? What needs to happen when people with different customs have to live together?

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Handout 9-1
Libation Ceremonies in Africa

by Zinse Agginie

Libation ceremonies are used to give thanks or to seek guidance from ancestors or the departed who forever play an important role in the lives and fortunes of the community. It is not a worship ceremony, rather an invitation to the ancestors to participate in the event and add their blessing.

Some important events accompanied by libation are marriage, childbirth, circumcision rites and death. Libation may be included in pre-harvest festivities and may be offered at the end of a drought as well as at the arrival of rain. It may also be offered after unusual events such as a rescue, or some extraordinary good fortune.

The leader of the ceremony is the libation master. He comes with a small glass of expensive alcohol, or in rare circumstances even water. He starts the ceremony with a mixture of speech and chants and then presents the glass a number of times to the heavens before pouring drops of the liquid on to the ground.

The libation master is regarded with great esteem in the community. He is a wise man, well-versed in the history, customs and traditions of his people. When performing, he uses language that is old and free of adulterations. He knows the names or nicknames of the local deities as well as those of important people, past and present.

A typical libation over a new-born child may go like this:

"Father of Fathers, Mothers too, Elders not so long ago with us, and those gone before we were born, all our guardians, we see the child you have sent us. Let him be strong, honest, sincere, large of heart. Let him be the source of mother's happiness and the crown of joy to his father. Let him walk only where men walk... In appreciation we invite you to partake of this.....

"Tswa!...tswa!...Amanie aba!....

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Handout 9-2
Rules of Courtesy in Ibo Society

Eze Nwoji and Gao Juwen

Most West Africans have a much more elaborate greeting ceremony than people in the U.S. African visitors to the United States are usually surprised and disappointed when people in the U.S. say, "Hi, how are you," and then go on without waiting for an answer. In most West African cultures, people take time to stop and talk to each other when they meet..

When Ibo friends meet, they address each other by their first names, shake hands and say "ked." They will stop for a while (maybe five minutes) to ask about each other's families and jobs. Women will usually ask each other "What are you going to sell in this market day?"

If you meet an older person you should behave with great respect. You should show respect by shaking hands using both hands. Yoruba always kneel down and bow before an older person. An Igbo also shows respect to an elder by avoiding looking directly in his face.

When you go to visit a family, they will treat you with a kola, palm wine and alligator pepper. The host breaks the kola, and prays for their ancestors for life and health, and for protection against evils.

If you hear someone calling you from outside at nights, you would never answer yes, because it might be an evil spirit calling you. What you should say is "Is that me?"

During a group gathering, the seating order usually goes by seniority. They sit on stools in a circle. The stools are carved differently according to ranks. Before every group gathering, people should pay tribute to their fathers by throwing pieces of kola and pouring some palm wine to the ground. A libation is also held to show respect to ancestors. When people talk to each other, it is impolite to rush them to begin to speak, even if there is an emergency.

When someone does a favor for you, most times, you will return the favor by giving them a hen, a rooster or a goat.

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Handout 9-3
Role Plays on Greeting Customs

Role Play One

Role A: Your are walking down the street. You meet someone who is in your class and greet them in a friendly manner.

Role Play One

Role B: You are walking down the street. You meet someone who is in your class and you deliberately snub them.

Role Play Two

Role A: You are an Ibo. Read the description of how Ibo greet each other. Pretend that you are walking down the street and meet an old friend.

Role Play Two

Role B: You are an Ibo. Read the description of how Ibo greet each other. Pretend that you are walking down the street and meet an old friend.

Role Play Three

Role A: You are in Ibo who has just come to the United States as an exchange student. Read the description of how Ibo greet each other. You are walking down the street and meet an American friend from your class. Since you don't know American customs well, you greet him or her as you would another Ibo.

Role Play Three

Role B: You are an American. You are walking down the street and meet a foreign student from your class. You greet him or her in a normal, friendly manner as you would another American.

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Part 4
African Arts
In the Community

In these lessons students will explore general ideas about African arts and several specific art forms.

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10. Art for Art's Sake/Art for Community's Sake

contributions by Linda Bell and Ephraim Urevbu

Subject:

Art and music

Overview:

Art in African traditions serves somewhat different functions than European art and is based on different aesthetic principles. In this lesson, students will begin to look at art from an African perspective.

Objectives:

1. To compare the functions of art in African and European societies.
2. To explore African aesthetic values.
3. To explore the concept of "canon" in schools.

Preparations and Materials Needed:

Assign students to bring in T-shirts that they consider particularly outstandingly designed or that have a particular significance or meaning to them.
Handout 10-1.

Activities:

1. Begin the lesson with a mind-mapping exercise to determine students' prior knowledge and to organize ideas. Ask students "What do you think of when you think of African arts?" Ask students to answer, write their answers on the board, organizing them into categories. You may have to prompt them with questions such as, "Do Africans make music or dance?" "What do you know about their music?" By the end of the discussion you should have a "map" showing the main ideas which students have about African arts.

2. Have students who brought T-shirts show them to other members of the class. Ask students to select the three best T-shirts—judging purely on the artistic quality of the design. Which T-shirts show the greatest artistic skill?

3. Have those who are willing share the story and meaning of their T-shirt. Ask students if they could rank T-shirts by meaning. (They might discuss the impact of the T-shirt on a person's life.) Note that a T-shirt with strong artistic qualities may not have much meaning and vice versa. Do T-shirt messages help shape people's values?

4. Ask students how they choose T-shirts. Do they choose them by artistic qualities or by meaning or both?

5. Point out that one of the biggest differences between African and European art is that in Africa (except for artists influenced by Europe), art is almost always used to help people work together for community functions. The interaction between the performers and the rest of the community is so complex that it is almost impossible to take the art out of its setting without losing much of its purpose. Art is used to uphold community values, not to bring glory to the performer.

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In European traditions, art is sometimes used to build community—particularly for religious purposes--but often it is put separate in museums or concert halls and is judged independently of its effect on an audience.

Hand out the "Quotations on African Arts." Have students read the quotations and summarize them in their own words. Have them discuss T-shirt art as an African might discuss it.

6. Ask students to give examples of some ways that they use art, music, literature, or dance to help a group of people get together more effectively. They may think of pep rallies, parties, church services, T-shirts to identify club membership, murals etc. Ask students how they judge the quality of art for these purposes—how do they choose a band for a dance or a design for a club T-shirt? Note that their criteria probably will have to do with the impact on the audience.

Ask students to think of ways that the arts—particularly music—have been used on a large scale to help people tackle global problems. Ask how this music is judged.

7. Ask students to give some examples of times that their art has been judged for art's sake—for example students who may have participated in a competition. Have them describe the criteria by which they were judged and their own focus as they worked. If they had been working by African criteria where their work would be judged by its impact on the community, what would they have done differently?

8. Explain to students that there has been a lot of argument lately over what works of art should be studied in schools. Many people have complained that European art traditions are overemphasized. Other people, using European ways of judging art, say that African art is not very good. Some young people don't want to study European art because they say it is boring. Let students discuss what kinds of art and music they like. Have their tastes been influenced more by Africa or Europe? What arts do you think should be studied in school? Whose criteria should be used?

9. Tell students that during this unit, we would like to use art to build a spirit of community in the classroom and in the school. Have students brainstorm ways that art and music could help people work together more effectively in the school. As you go through the unit, discuss ways that the art could be used to help people work together more effectively. Let students experiment with music, drumming, and classroom decoration as ways of increasing community spirit and productivity. Be sure to have students evaluate the effectiveness of each experiment. Having students describe their experiments and their effects would be good journal assignments.

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Handout 10-1
Looking at African Art

Quotation One:
from a lecture by Ephraim Urevbu
Nigerian artist with a studio in Memphis, TN

The African artist creates for the community. Traditionally, most African works were unsigned. It is not individual work. The primary purpose of African art is not to be aesthetically pleasing, but to serve the community. For example, one of the great works of African art is a bronze head from Benin which was sculpted to commemorate a treaty with the Portuguese. This work, now in the British Museum, shows the crown of the African king and symbols of the Portuguese.

A work of art may be commissioned as an abode for ancestral spirits. The object becomes a means of communicating with the spirits. Africans will feed the object as a way of feeding the real spirit. Masks are a living symbol of a way of getting in touch with spirits.

Quotation Two:
Values in African Music
John Miller Chernoff
excerpted from African Rhythm and African Sensibility,
University of Chicago Press, page 153

The essential criteria for distinguishing excellence in African music are...as much ethical as aesthetic.

If the music is good, people listen, dance, and enjoy themselves. If it is bad, they will try to correct it in whatever way then can, perhaps by making fun of a vain dancer or anyone present with a bad attitude, perhaps by offering suggestions or encouragement to the musicians, perhaps by buying some beer, or perhaps, if their mood is hopeless, by being sensible enough to leave the place ...Since an African musical performance is so much a part of its social setting, we can recognize African critical standards by what happens in the situation itself.

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11. Looking at African Art

Subject: Art

Overview:

African art is based on different aesthetic principles from western art. In this lesson, students will learn several basic things to look for in African art.

Objectives:

1. Students will recognize African art as a different aesthetic tradition.
2. Students will recognize that African art has influenced twentieth century European and American art.
3. Students will identify and recognize the following characteristics of African aesthetics:
   a. Usually not interested in "photographic" art. Often try to show inner or spiritual qualities.
   b. Distortion of shapes to emphasize features, create an emotional effect or show an inner quality or create a geometric pattern.
   c. Interest in geometric patterns.

Materials and Preparations Needed:

Picasso or other abstract art prints or slides.
Handouts 11-1, 11-2, 11-3, 11-4
Other slides or pictures or examples of African arts (see resource list).

Activities:

1. Pass out the handout on Cote d'Ivoire mud painting. Ask students for reactions. Do they like it? If possible, show real examples of mud painting.

This is a simple painting. It is not by a great artist. It is probably by a person who is no more talented in art than the best of you. If you wanted to draw a fish or a game bird or a zebra, could you draw one that looked more like the animal than this artist did?

Ask students to take out a piece of paper and draw a chicken or turkey, a fish or a horse, deer or antelope. Choose the best drawings and compare them with the African drawing. You will probably get several that are more realistic than the African drawing.

Point out that many of them could draw more realistically than the African artist. And this artist could, too, if he had wanted to. This artist had a different idea. What was he trying to do? (Lead the students to note the design-like quality—the interest in geometric designs, the emphasis of the lines. Note how the animals are almost changed into geometric shapes.)

Ask students to try drawing animals in this way. See if you can change them into geometric shapes or designs. Give students a few minutes to experiment—they will probably realize that it is not as easy as it looks.

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African artists tend to be interested in lines and in geometric designs. In their art they often emphasize interesting lines or geometric patterns and leave out everything else.

2. Remind students that one of the characteristics of European art has been an effort to make things look real. While some European art has been stylized, the most distinctive characteristic of European art compared to art of other cultures has been the effort to capture exactly what a person sees. After the camera was invented, however, realistic art did not seem very exciting.

So artists started looking in new directions. During the early Twentieth Century when Europeans were experimenting with new styles, many of the artists such as Pablo Picasso became intrigued by African art, and began developing new forms of European art that incorporated ideas from African art.

Show pictures of Picasso drawings or paintings. How is this different from a photograph? (Have students react. Point out the use of geometric patterns and abstraction.)

3. Hand out the picture of the Akua ba doll. If possible, pass around a real Akua ba doll. Ask students to compare the doll with what a realistic doll would have looked like? Have students note the geometric patterns. Have them also note the exaggeration of certain features.

Discuss the effect that the doll creates. What does it make you feel or think of?

Explain that the Akua ba doll is a fertility symbol from the Ashanti of Ghana. A woman who wants a baby might carry the doll.

4. Next have students look at the two pieces of sculpture. Have students first share their impressions. Look at the proportions of the two figures to normal human proportions. African sculpture is typically foreshortened—with the head large and the legs short. Ask students what effects these proportions create.

Focus students' attention on the faces. Note the geometric forms.

What effect do the two sculpture pieces create? Are they beautiful? What feeling do they create? Note that African sculpture was often used for religious purposes—more to create a sense of awe than to create something pretty.

5. Have students look at the drawing of a calabash. Point out that much of African art is devoted to design of everyday objects—most African art was to be used. Ask students to describe the effect created by this object.

6. Show slides 6, 7, 9 and 10. Point out that African architecture often uses geometric designs, or may be painted or decorated with either geometric or realistic designs.

7. If you are not doing the lesson on African masks, have students look at the Yoruba headdress and Bini mask from that lesson and the slides of African dancers.

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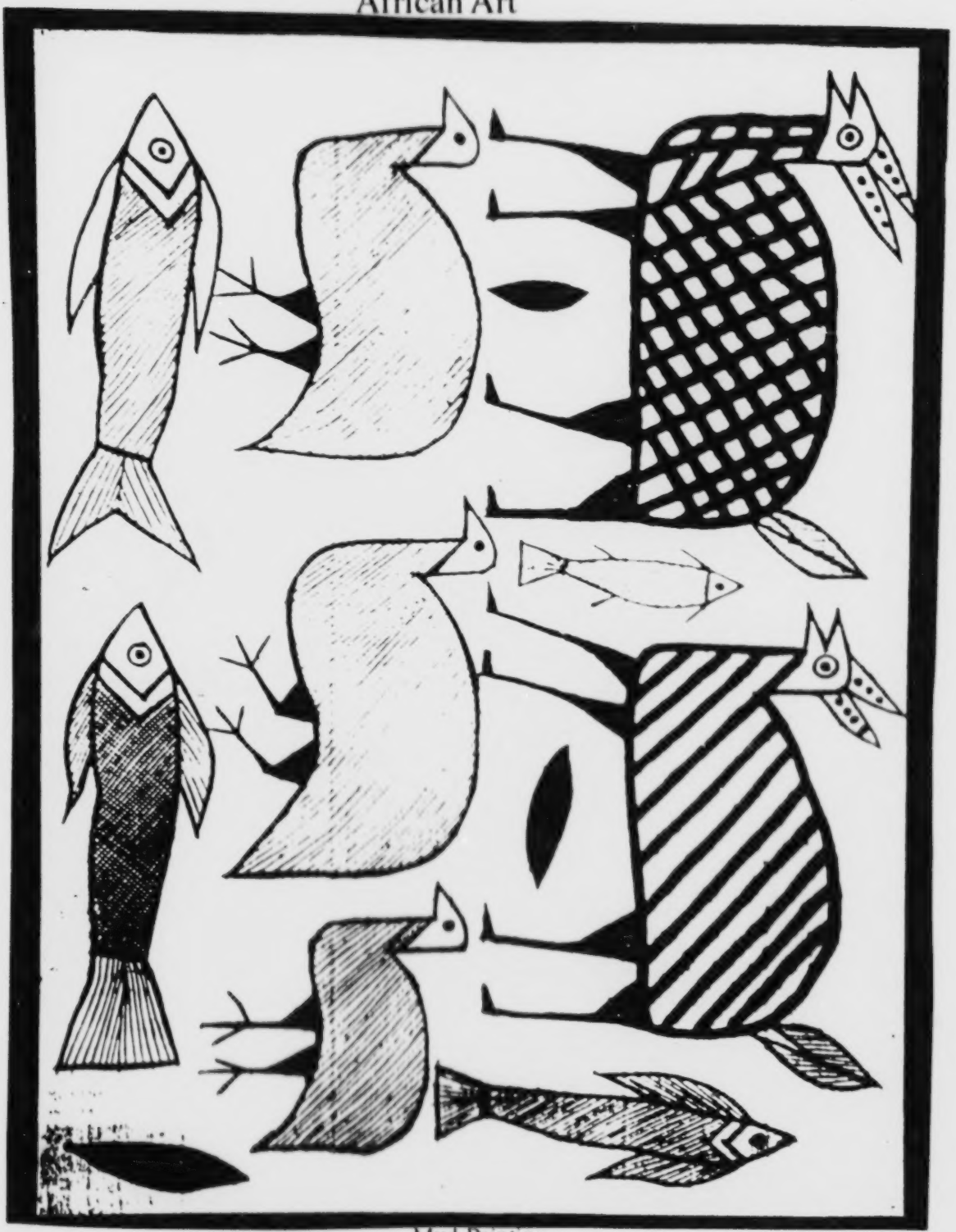
Handout 11-1
African Art



Mud Painting
Probably from Cote d'Ivoire

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Handout 11-2
African Art

Akua ba doll
Ashanti of Ghana

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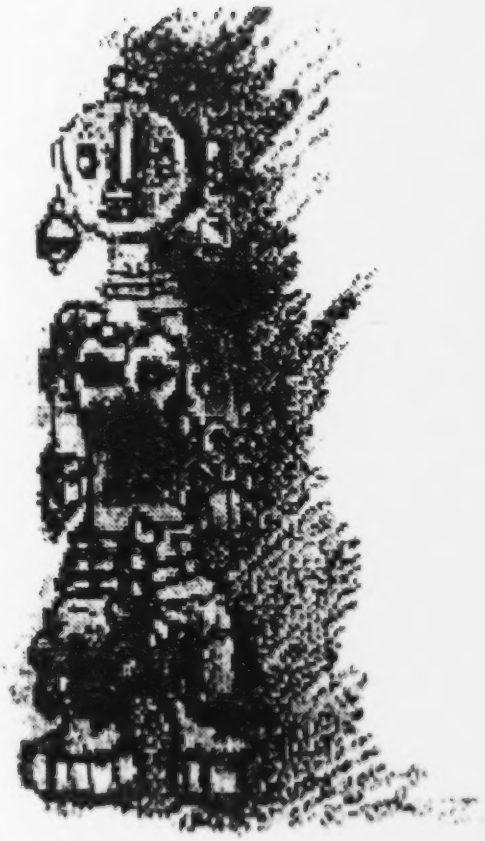
Handout 11-3
African Art

Headdress: figure in wood, pigment
Eket, Nigeria



Female figure in wood, bead and metal ornaments, cloth, fiber and pigment Igala, Nigeria

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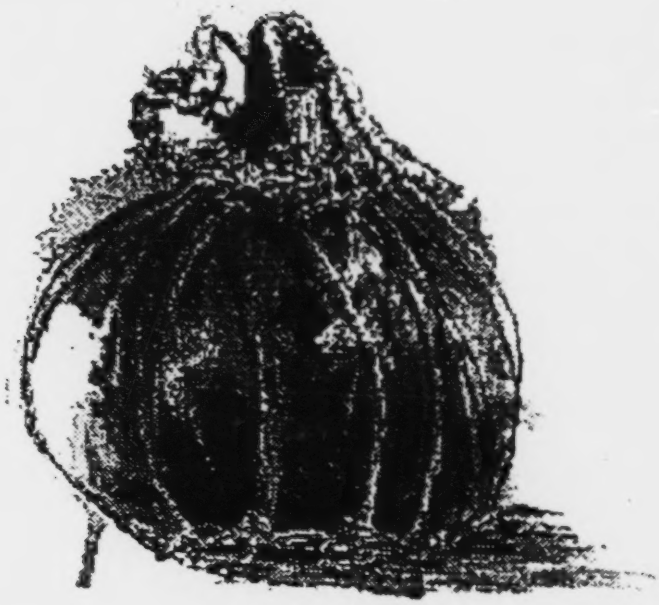
Handout 11-4
Calabash



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12. African Masks

by Barbara Glover

Subjects:

Art and social studies

Overview:

In this lesson students will explore some of the uses of African masks and the aesthetic principles shown in masks and they will construct their own masks.

Objectives:

1. To explore uses of masks in African society and compare the use to U.S. society.
2. To explore aesthetic principles used in African masks
3. To make a paper mache mask and a variety of man-made objects.

Materials and Preparations Needed:

African masks or good pictures of African masks
Handouts 12-1, 12-2 and 12-3
Slides 16, 17, 18 and 19
9 x 12 white paper
Newspaper
Balloon
Flour and water paste
Tempera paint and brushes
Egg carton

Activities:

1. Have illustrations and examples of African masks around the room. Give students a chance to look at them. Or show slides of African masks.

2. Introduce masks by asking the students to share what information they know about masks. How do they use masks? What do their masks look like? Ask if they know anything about uses of masks in other cultures.

3. Have students go to the library and have the students make a list of five facts about African masks.

4. Discuss student information found in the library on masks. What are some of the things that are common to all of the African cultures?

Make sure the following points come out:

-African masks are usually used as a part of a religious or community ceremony, not just for fun as in our culture. They often represent a spirit or an ancestor.

-African masks often try to capture a feeling or a spirit. Look at the examples you have and ask students what feelings they represent to them.

5. Pass out the handout of the Yoruba headdress. Look at the drawing of a Yoruba

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headdress from Nigeria. Ask students to describe the effects that the artist has created. Note the use of geometric forms. Note that the mask is actually two faces—have students identify the two sets of eyes and then describe the two faces—a long-nosed horned animal and a human face.

Point out that this mask may have been worn by a dancer whose face was concealed by a costume. Ask students to tell what feelings the mask conveys to them.

6. Have students look at the Benin sculpture from Nigeria. The markings on the forehead represent tribal markings and around the hair are representations of heads of Portuguese. This mask was made of ivory and was worn on the belt of the ruler. (See Urevbu quote from the previous lesson.) Have students discuss this more realistic work—but note the more subtle exaggerations, particularly of the eyes and geometric features. (Show the class sample two) Do you see the main lines they have emphasized? Can you draw the main lines? Has the artist emphasized geometric designs?

What else has the artist done that is different from western art? Notice how certain features are exaggerated. African artists often exaggerate features either to create interesting lines or to bring out an inner meaning or an emotion. African arts often are religious, and African artists often try to show the spiritual beings which are not really visible, or abstract ideals such as evil or the inner being of a person. What feelings or ideals does this art suggest to you?

Show students slides 16 and 19. Discuss the same questions with them.

7. Art historian Robert Farris Thompson says that the following three Yoruba words describe the qualities their art tries to convey. Put these words on the board:

"ashe" means "power and command"
"itutu" means composure or coolness
"iwa" means character

Ask students if they see these qualities in the African masks and sculpture they have looked at. Have them look back at the sculpture from the previous lesson. Can they see these qualities?

8. Ask students what qualities American masks try to create—fear, horror, humor for example. How are they similar to and different from African masks? (Americans at Halloween are playing, while Africans use masks for religious ceremonies.)

9. Show slides 17 and 18 which show masquerade dancers, showing how the masks are a part of a complex costume. The dancers in slide 17 are from the Dogon culture in Mali.

10. Have students look again at the African masks. Look at each mask and have students share what feelings they have about the mask—what kind of person or being the mask seems to be. Have them discuss the way the artist created the effect. Note use of geometric forms. Note exaggeration of features—especially eyes.

Compare the kinds of exaggeration used by African artistis with the way cartoons try to show a character's personality through lines and shapes. Or experiment on the board. Draw some geometric patterns such as square, triangle, oval etc. and have students tell what kind of person they associate with them. Then practice with a few famous people or characters from books they are reading. Ask students what shape they would use for the person's face, what lines for the eyebrows, etc. You might assign them to capture a character from a book they are reading in English or a historical figure from history class in a mask.

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11. Have students draw a plan of a mask they will create on a 9 x 12 piece of white paper. Encourage them to use African design techniques. Note that African masks are usually carved from wood, but that they will be using paper mache. Discuss the differences in the way paper mache and wood look. Discuss ways that they can make their paper mache look like wood.

12. Blow up a balloon to the size of the desired mask.

13. Use the following instruction to create the paper mache (Two people work together).

a. Tear one-inch strips of newspaper.
b. Cover table with newspaper.
c. Mix flour and water into a thin mixture. (Do not pour down the sink.)
d. Dip newspaper into paste and run strip through your fingers to remove excess paste.
e. Place pasted newspaper on your blown-up balloon.
f. Alternate the direction of the strips.
g. Smooth newspaper edges as you add each strip.
h. Apply three layers of newspaper strips.
i. Let dry and add 3 more layer strips.
j. Let dry.
k. Cut in half, Make 2 masks from 1 balloon.

14. Prepare to paint masks. Get out materials: water container, brushes, newspaper to cover desk, egg carton for paint, paper towel to clean brushes. After painting, close the egg carton up tight and the paint can be used again.

15. Plan designs to paint on your mask. Take your time, don't rush.

16. After painting, spray with clear acrylic paint.

17. Have students look at each others' masks and compare them with the original African masks. What qualities of the African masks have they captured? How are their masks different from African masks?

18. Write a one-page paper on the importance of masks to the African culture.

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Handout 12-1
African Masks

Nigerian Headdress, Yoruba Culture
This mask has two distinctive faces carved of one wood piece.
Attached to a wood cap is a long-nosed visage of a horned animal.

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Handout 12-2
African Masks

This ivory mask from 16th century Benin was worn by the ruler on his belt. The hair is a frieze of heads of Portuguese merchants.

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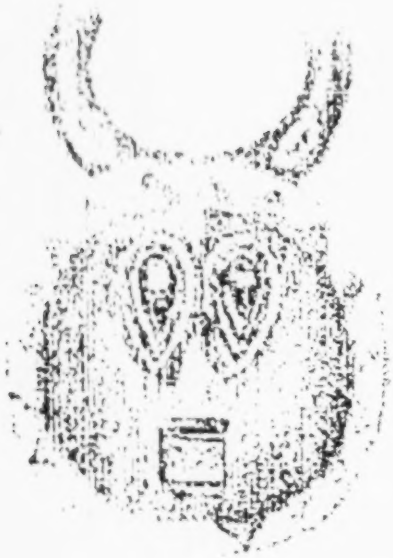
Handout 12-3
African Masks



Examples of African masks imported by
Images of Africa, Little Rock, Arkansas

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13. Fabric and Clothing Design

Contributed by Lenora Murray, Clare Alale, Lorraine Jones, Linda Bell

Subjects:

Art, math, home economics, and social studies

Overview:

Complex patterns are an important feature of African art and music. Although the kind of analyses of pattern used in this lesson are quite un-African, this approach may be quite useful in helping others appreciate the patterns of African art.

Patterns occur regularly in statistics, higher math and scientific investigations. Therefore the ability to recognize patterns is a necessary skill often overlooked in traditional mathematics courses until late in the Algebra II course. This lesson and the lesson that follow help students recognize patterns in geometry and the arts. The lesson is also based on the new National Council of Teachers of Mathematics standards which encourage the development of a sense of how math is related to real- life situations, developing an enjoyment of mathematics and using tactile and kinesthetic senses in mathematics courses.

Objectives:

1. To examine patterns in traditional African cloth designs and clothing styles.
2. To learn various African clothing styles.
3. To analyze geometric designs with graph paper.
4. To learn different ways that African cloths are created.

Materials and Preparations Needed:

Handouts 13-1, 13-2, 13-3

Graph paper, paper for stencils

Cloth or T-shirts and dye

Activities:

1. Explain that much African art depends on use of geometric patterns. Give students the handout on geometric patterns. Have them cut out a pattern on a stencil and trace patterns of each kind on a piece of paper.

2. Have students look at the handout "Kinds of African Cloth" and display examples of African cloths or show slides if available. Ask students to identify examples of reflections, rotations, lines of symmetry, translations and glide reflections.

3. Give each student a sheet of graph paper. Have each mark off one suitable rectangular size corner with a very simple shape in it. Then each student is to develop an original pattern using this shape, with reflections, rotations or translations to develop the strip pattern. Complete the strip pattern. Then color it in simple repeating style. Analyze your method of patterning, and on the back of your pattern, label it.

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4. Give students copies of the designs from adinkra cloth. Note the sample of adinkra cloth. These designs are combined into squares or rectangles which are then combined to produce an overall design. Have students do a second strip pattern using adinkra symbols.

5. Design your own clothing fashions. Choose a piece of cloth large enough for a bubu or wrapper or a head-wrap, or use a T-shirt. Choose one of the methods of cloth design on the handouts. Plan your design. Then follow the instructions for one of the kinds of African cloth design.

Compare your finished product to your original design. What problems, if any, did you have in carrying out your design?

Instructions for Tie-Dying

Note: This is a very messy activity. Do it outside if at all possible.

Tie-dying, which has become popular in America, is a traditional West African craft. Fabrics from Liberia and Sierra Leone are particularly intricate.

Materials:

1. Lightweight cotton cloth for wrappers or head ties or T-shirts. (Strips from old sheets can be used)
2. Dye
3. Stove or hot plate for heating water for dye.
4. Clothes line and clothes pins or ground to spread cloth
5. Five-gallon bucket, tub, or basin for every 15 (T-shirt size) pieces.
6. Buckets, tubs or basins for rinse water.
7. Spoons or tongs.
8. Scissors
9. Twine or elastic bands.

Procedure:

1. Prepare dye according to package directions.

2. Tell students they are going to tie-dye. Explain that they will make their designs by folding or crumpling the cloth and tying or knotting it. The only areas of the cloth that will not be died are those that are covered by twine or knotted tightly.

Suggest they can make a marbled effect by crumpling fabric and wrapping string around it. They can pleat fabric and tie string around the pleats at various places. They can make a sunburst effect by knotting a piece of fabric.

3. Have students prepare cloth by tying or knotting it—and have them guess what the designs will look like.

4. Once they have the material bound, the students can put it into the dye. After the material has been in the dye for as long as the directions on the dye say, it should be rinsed, preferably in running water, although a bucket of clear water can be used. When no more dye rinses out in the water, the material can be untied, and hung to dry. The material can be soaked in a salt and vinegar solution to firmly set the dye.

5. If possible, have students compare their designs with designs from African tie-died fabric.

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Instructions for Batik

Batik dying in West Africa differs from other areas by using cassava starch instead of wax for a resist. Dye resist is a substance applied to cloth that will resist dye. A design drawn with resist on the cloth will not dye. When the resist is washed away, the area it covered will be the color of the original material. Since cassava starch is only available sometimes in American stores, in its place you can use a paste made of ordinary flour and water. However, the pattern edge will be blurry, not sharp - something to remember when planning your design.

Materials:

1. Piece of white or light-colored cloth (natural fabic, not synthetic)
2. Flour
3. Cold water fabric dye

Procedure:

1. Plan a design. You may want to copy one of the Adire cloth designs. You can use a stencil to make it easier to copy the design. For first projects, use a simple plan. Remember the design you make with the resist will be the original color of the cloth.

2. Make a thick paste resist of flour mixed with water. Paint your design on the cloth with the resist, using matchsticks, brush handles, pipe cleaners, or other sticks. Push the paste down into the fibers. To keep dye from penetrating the back of the cloth, apply resist paste to the design on the back of the cloth as well. The dampness of the cloth where the paste was applied to the front will guide you in putting it on the reverse.

3. Prepare a cool-water dye. Bathe the cloth in the dye. Do not agitate it any more than necessary.

4. Lay the cloth flat to dry.

5. When dry, wash the cloth in hot water to rinse away the resist paste.

Instructions for Print Making

Print-making in Africa is a complex precedure. In some villages, the whole village is involved in one or another stage of print-making. The procedure for fabric printing described here is greatly simplified. Potatoes are not used for making prints in Africa; however, they are an easy material for students to work with in the classroom. Obviously, the student prints will be much cruder and less complex than the genuine African prints.

If you do not want students cutting in class, you can send the potatoes home with them in baggies to be cut at home.

Materials:

1. Potatoes
2. Knife to cut potatoes
3. Markers
4. Tempera paint
5. Paper or cloth to print on

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Procedure:

1. Cut the potato in half.
2. Draw a design on the potato with a marker.
3. Cut away the part of the potato you do not want in the design. Cut about half an inch deep.
4. Put tempera paint in a bowl.
5. Dip the potato in the bowl. Blot with a paper towel. Then stamp on the paper or the fabric.

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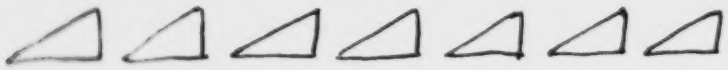
Handout 13-1
Geometric Patterns

Repeating Strip

One of the simplest kinds of geometric designs is repeating a pattern across a strip. For example, on a piece of cloth, you might have a pattern on a stencil and copy it in a line across the fabric. Or you might have the pattern on a block and print it across the fabric.

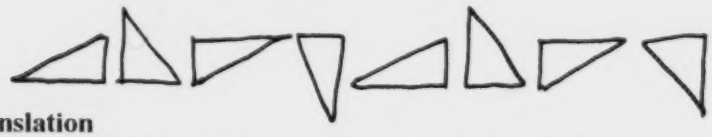


Reflection

A reflection is a mirror image. When an image is reflected on the same line, it creates a symmetrical figure.

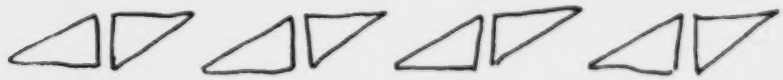
Rotation

A rotation is a pattern turned on its side or at an angle.



Translation

A translation is a pattern flipped over backwards.

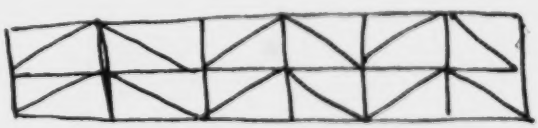


Glide Reflection

A pattern is turned and offset.

Tesselation

A tesselating pattern repeats and completely covers an area with no spaces. It is like a jigsaw puzzle in which every piece is the same—though they may be turned at all different angles.



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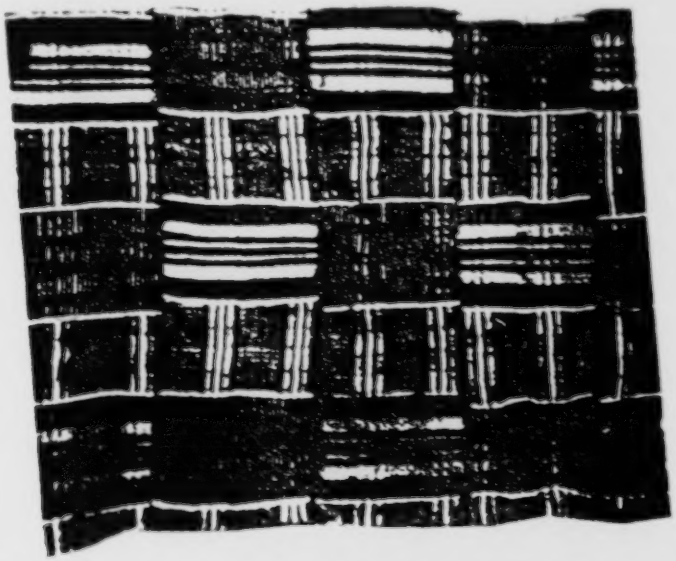
Handout 13-2a
Kinds of African Cloth

Kente cloth

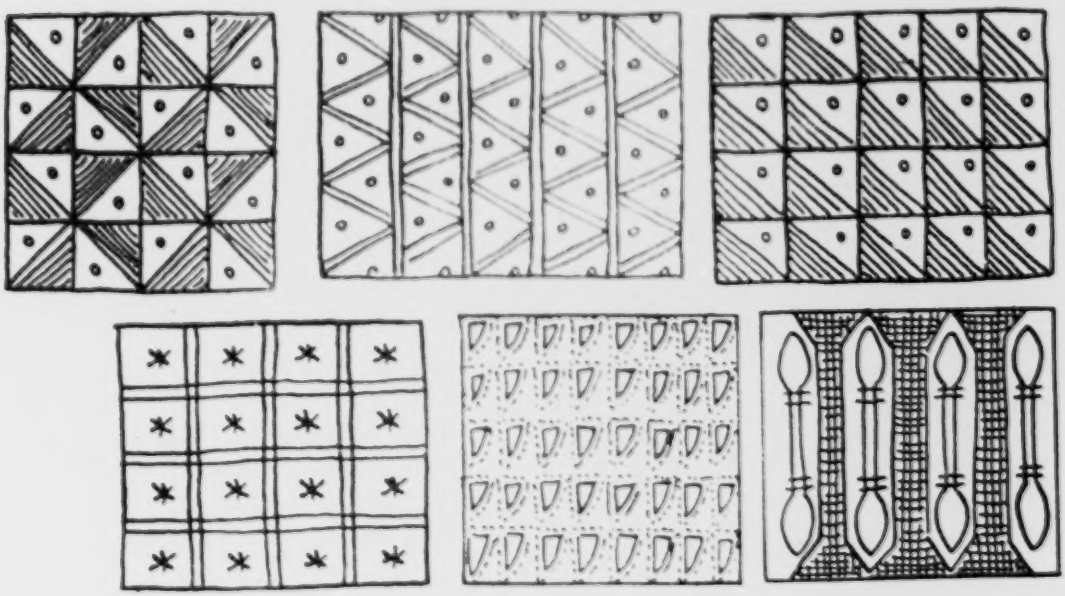
Hand-woven cloth in geometric patterns from the Ashanti of Ghana. Kente cloth is woven in thin strips with geometric designs which are sewn together. The resulting cloth looks from a distance somewhat like a patchwork quilt.



Adire cloth

Adire cloth is a batik made by the Yoruba by starching a pattern onto white cloth, then dying the cloth blue. The part of the cloth where the starch was remains white.

Adire cloth usually consists of a number of squares, each having its own pattern. The patterns are often put on with stencils.



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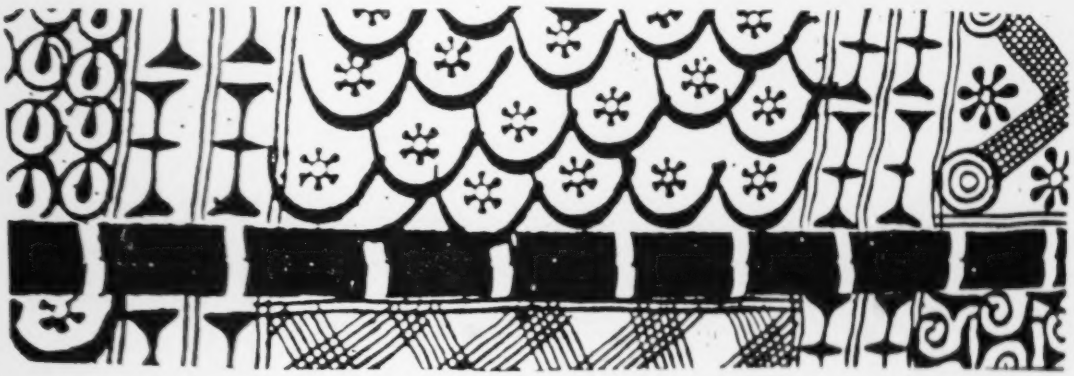
Handout 13-2b

Tie-dyed cloth

Tie-dyed cloth is made by tying cloth in patterns and dipping it in ink. African tie-died cloths are often of quite intricate patterns with many colors. Designs may be made by tying knots at intervals, accordian pleating or twisting the cloth and tying it.

Adinkra cloth

Printed cloth from the Akan of Ghana. Geometric designs are printed on white cloth for men or colored cloth for women. It is an elegant cloth for formal occasions made in craft villages where each person specializes in one part of production. For example, one person might cut stamps and another prepare the dye. Symbols are repeated and alternated with geometric patterns.



Mudcloth

Mudcloth from Mali is hand woven and printed with geometric designs.

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Handout 13-3
Adinkra Cloth Designs

symbol of agreement or contract

Moon and stars, a symbol of faithfulness

symbol of forgiveness

A symbol of human relations

warhorn

A symbol for the proverb "You can always undo your mistakes"

"the king of adinkra"

The ram's horns, from the proverb "It is the heart and not the horns that leads a ram to bully."

the symbol of hope

A symbol of knowledge and wisdom

A symbol of the power of God

Star from the proverb "A child of the Supreme Being, I do not depend on myself. My illumination is only a reflection of his."

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14. Music

Contributions by Bobbye Burke and Lenora Murray

Subjects:

Music. Can adapt to any grade.

Overview:

Students will explore characteristics of West African music.

Objectives:

1. Students will identify and perform characteristics of African music, including polyrhythmic patterns, improvisation on assigned rhythm patterns and sounds of various drums.

2. Students will explore melody in the music of West Africa by recognizing the call-and-response form of songs.

Materials and Preparations Needed:

Handouts 14-1, 14-2, 14-3, 14-4

If available, tapes or videos of African music and African instruments (See bibliography for sources.)

Activities:

1. Have students listen to a recording of West African music which includes a strong percussion element. First, have them listen for overall enjoyment. Ask them to describe as many characteristics of it as they can. Make sure that they are aware of the importance of the percussion elements and their complexity.

Then, replay as students try to pick out any pattern of the interaction of any two instruments that they can find. Students need to record somehow the beats they hear. Class will then compare what each finds in the particular piece.

2. Have students explore body sounds. Have them demonstrate body percussion patterns they already know such as patty cake. Have them suggest ways of making additional percussive body sounds and practice creating them. Have them practice developing group patterns by having one person start with perhaps a foot stamp, another join with a clap and another join with finger snapping.

3. If you have been able to obtain African instruments, have students explore the African instruments, trying out different ways of making sounds and noticing their distinctive features. Have them develop their own rhythms combining the instruments with body sounds. Experiment with the development of communication between the different instruments.

4. Have students compare the African instruments they have been exploring with the pictures on the study sheet. Have them name the instruments and look at the description of the way they are used in music.

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5. Have students once again listen to a recording or watch a video and try to identify the different percussion instruments.

6. Have students plan a simple percussion composition using body percussion sounds or the African instruments and perform it for other students in class.

7. Listen to African vocal music with a call-and-response pattern. Discuss how this pattern creates interaction among a group of people.

8. Teach students the three songs included in the unit. The best way to get an African sound with the complex rhythms is to begin with the drumbeat, then have the singers stand up and move to the music, then add the vocal part to fit the rhythm felt from the drum and movement. African singing style is without vibrato and with resonance in the front of the mouth.

In "Kye Kye Kole," note the call and response pattern.

"Berceuse Toucouleure" is a lullaby from the Toucouleure people of Senegal. Note that it could be sung with the leader singing the line and the group joining on "tinthin mboti.

"Yeke Omo Mi" This song is the most difficult, but well worth the effort.

The songs in this lesson are from Rockabye Baby: Lullabies of Many Lands and People and Sing Children Sing: Songs, Dances and Singing Games of Many Lands and Peoples and are used by permission of Hal Leonard Corporation.

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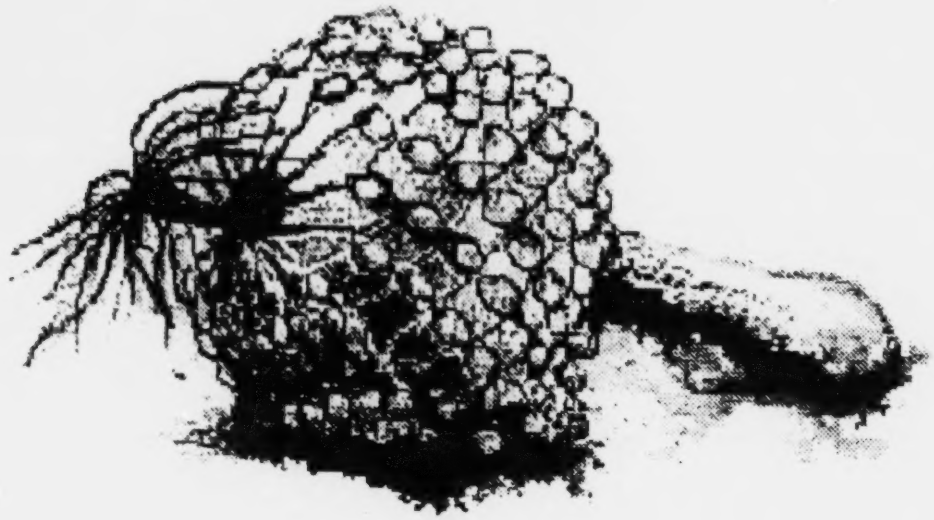
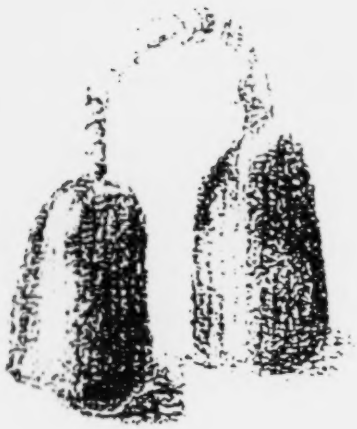
Handout 14-1
African Instruments





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Handout 14-2a
Yeke Omo Mi

In this lullaby from southern Nigeria, the pattern of drumming is as much a part of the song as are its words. Drumming is an important art and a common mode of expression in Nigeria. From babyhood, children are entertained by drumming and many learn to play at a very early age. The rhythm shown with this song is a pattern of drumming known as *Omele* which originated with the Yoruba-speaking people, but is now popular all over the country. Notice the accents for the drum accompaniment. Traditionally, each phrase of the main part of the song starts on one of those accents.

Moderately, relaxed
Drum
Ye-ke, o - mo mi,
O - to, o - mo mi,
O - mo mi, ye - ke,
O - mo mi, o - to,
Ye - ke, o - mo mi,
O - to, o - mo mi,
O - mo mi, ye - ke, E - mi ni i - ya re,
O - mo mi, o - to, E - mi ni ba - ba re,
Ye - ke, o - mo mi,
O - to, o - mo mi,
O - mo mi, ye - ke, E - mi ni i - ya re,
O - mo mi, o - to, E - mi ni ba - ba re
Ye - ke, o - mo mi,
O - to o - mo mi,
1.
2.
O - mo mi ye - ke.
O - mo mi o - to.
E

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Handout 14-2b
Yeke Omo Mi

English translation of the words:

O, do not cry, my little treasure,
O, do not cry, my little treasure,
For here is your mother.
O, do not cry, my little loved one,
For here is your mother,
Do, do not cry, my little treasure.

O, hush-a-bye, my little treasure,
O, hush-a-bye, my little treasure,
For here is your father.
O, hush-a-bye, my little loved one,
For here is your father.
O, hush-a-bye, my little treasure.

Dear children yonder strewn,
Around me come soon
Like stars 'round the moon.
(repeat)

O, hush-a-bye, my little loved one.

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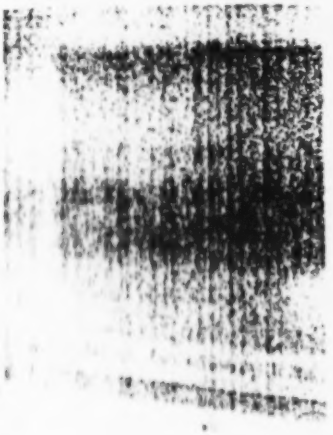
Handout 14-3
Berceuse Toucouleure

Senegalese

Leisurely
opt. Guitar or Drum
Thu - ka - vēl ga - da - ma ya tin - thin m-bo - ti
Nda dōn - gal nda dōn - gal Tin - thin m-bo - ti ko - min dé Fa - ti - ma-ta
Tin - thin m-bo-ti Bi yu-ma Nda gōn - dal nda gōn - dal Tin-thin m-bo-ti



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Handout 14-4
Kye Kye Kole

In this rhythmic game from Ghana, the players form a circle with the Leader in the center. The Leader places his hands on his head and sings: *Kye kye kole*. The other players take the same position and repeat. Leader sings the next phrase with hands on shoulders, others follow; third phrase with hands on hips, fourth with hands on shoulders, others follow. On the last phrase the Leader falls to the ground; the others follow. Then without warning the Leader gets up and tries to tag one of the other players, who scramble to their feet and run away. They must *not* start getting up until the Leader does. Whoever is tagged becomes the next Leader. The words are mainly nonsense syllables.

Lively
Leader:
Group:
Che - che - koo - lay, che - che - koo - lay.
Drum(s)
L. G. L. G.
Che-che Ko-fi sa, che-che Ko-fi sa. Ko-fi sa-lan - ga, Ko-fi sa-lan -ga.
L. G. L. G.
Ca-ca - shi lan - ga, ca - ca- shi lan - ga. Koom - ma-dye - day, Koom- ma-dye - day.

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15. African Literature

by Lois Thompson and Joyce Underwood

Subject: English

Overview:

The study of literature of other countries and cultures can give students a better understanding of the commonality and diversity of human experience.

Stories of other cultures are timeless because they are true—not necessarily true in the scientific sense, but in the more elemental sense of telling us truths about ourselves. Through literature we can grasp the very beginnings of culture and learn what it means to be human. Understanding other cultures is not easy. It requires time, study, and awareness of the diversity of human experience. However, it is important that we are aware there are basic human needs, wants, and values in all cultures. Values such as good, evil, truth, justice, and a love of beauty create universal themes that have existed since the beginning of time.

Objectives:

1. To foster awareness of the rich heritage of African literature and how such literature has influenced our own thought and language.
2. To extend awareness and appreciation of the diverse cultures reflected in literature.
3. To stimulate oral and written expression in a variety of forms.
4. To identify and create examples of oral poetry: praise songs, elegiac and religious verse and love poetry.
5. To demonstrate an understanding of characterization by African authors.
7. Interpret non-literal language: personification, similes, metaphors, and proverbs.

Materials and Preparations Needed:

Handouts 15-1, 15-2, 15-3, 15-4, 15-5, 15-6, 15-7, 15-8
Other collections of African literature

Activities:

Activity 1: African Poetry

1. Tell students that they are beginning a series of lessons on African literature. Assign them to keep a journal in which they record their reactions to the literature each day.

2. Explain that Africans often used poetry as part of their community life and ceremonies. African literature is frequently designed to strengthen relationships between people.

Put the four following kinds of African poetry on the board. Describe each kind of poetry and ask students to discuss whether or not we have comparable kinds of poetry. Note how they all involve human relationships.

Praise songs: praising an important person and telling of his or her great deeds.

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Eulogies: poems to the dead.

Religious verse: usually a poem to a deity.

Love poetry

Read aloud or ask students to find examples of each kind of poetry.

3. Have students read the poem, "Quarrel." Ask them to explain its meaning in their own words. What does it say about human relationships? Have students examine the comparisons and figurative language.

Activity 2: Proverbs and Folk Tales:

1. African folktales are used to instill children with a sense of their culture and its rules of bahavior. Folktales give us a sense of how a culture thinks. Compile an anthology of African folktales. Explain their role in African culture.

2. Have students read the Ibo folk tale. Have students tell the story, trying to recreate the setting described by the author.

3. Have students read the two versions of the Tar Baby story. Suggest as a project researching other West African folk tales which are found in the Americas.

4. Have students read the folktale, "Patience is Everything." This is an example of a dilemma tale, a popular teaching tale in Africa. As the storyteller tells the story, people are invited to give their own solutions. Some dilemma tales end with the question and do not give a solution. Most of them involve hard choices between three good or three bad choices.

5. Have students read the story, "Ogedengbe's Drummers." This is an example of an oral history story. The places it refers to are real, and the events are probably true, though they may have been somewhat changed through time to make the story better. Like many African tales, it emphasizes winning by using your head to outwit the opponent.

6. As a project, have students develop a storytelling performance.

7. African proverbs are not just "wise sayings." Among some traditional African ethnic groups, legal questions are solved by an exchange of proverbs. Compile a collection of African proverbs from the novels you are reading.

In the excerpt from *Anthills of the Savannah*, note how the uncle uses proverbs. This is a traditional way of presenting an argument among Nigerians.

Activity 3: African Stories and Novels

The two novel excerpts included in this unit represent two of West Africa's most outstanding novelists. They also include information about some of the topics included in other parts of the book. They are both quite difficult reading, and students will probably need the teacher to lead them through the selections.

Isara, by Wole Soyinka.

Wole Soyinka was the first West African writer to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. *Ake, the World of Childhood* is another of his books advanced students might enjoy. He has also written a number of plays. Many of his works are set in the area around Abeokuta in Western Nigeria, where he was raised. He is from the Yoruba culture.

Isara is a novel based on the life of his father, who was a schoolteacher. Soditan Akinode, nicknamed "Essay," has recently returned home when this excerpt begins. His wife, Morola, is in the hospital. This excerpt is a character sketch of Mrs. Esan, who is similar to several other female characters in Soyinka's works. She at first seems quite a simple woman interested only in clothes and family, but is gradually revealed to be quite complex with

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deep insights into politics and success in a number of spheres of life.

The first section reveals the importance of cloth and weaving to women. The bubu, iro, and gele are pieces of women's clothing. You might incorporate some information from the chapter on clothing.

This story takes place during World War II. At first, they discuss the shortages caused by the war, but gradually focus on political issues. The British recruited Africans to fight in the war, and for many it was a turning point in their thinking. They were exposed to ideas of people like Mahatma Gandhi who was seeking independence for India. And after seeing the way that Europeans were butchering each other in Europe, they could laugh at articles like the one they are discussing which claimed that Africans could not govern themselves.

Anthills of the Savannah by Chinua Achebe

Achebe is another well-known Nigeria writer. *Things Fall Apart*, his best-known work, is set at the turn of the century and explores the impact of the whites on Igbo culture.

Anthills of the Savannah takes place in an imaginary city in an imaginary country which has a lot of resemblances to Lagos, Nigeria. Bernice is holding a naming ceremony for the baby of Elewa. The baby's father has just been killed in the political violence. The baby is born at a time of great turmoil in the country, and the characters are trying to do their best to provide it a good beginning.

If students have not previously studied the play on the African naming ceremony from Lesson 7, they should study it before reading this excerpt. Have students compare the changes the modern people have made under the difficult circumstances. This story shows how people adapt traditional customs to meet changing conditions. It also describes the interaction between the three primary religions in Nigeria. Agatha is a Christian, Aina is a Moslem, and Beatrice practices a modern version of the traditional religion.

Note the way the author develops the character of the uncle and the mother. Have students anallyze how different elements of their character emerge from the beginning picture of the uncle as an old drunk to the ending when he shows considerable wisdom.

Elewa and some of the guests speak in pidgin English (see lesson 16). If you read their words aloud, quickly, you will probably get most of the meaning.

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Handout 15-1
Poetry

Quarrel

Yoruba traditional poem
translated by Ulli Beier

Nobody will quarrel with the woodcock,
because of his blue coat.
Nobody will quarrel with the parrot
because of his red tail.
You old people of this world,
don't be my enemies.
Would you kill a dog because it barks?
Would you kill a ram because he butts?
Foprgive me, don't fight,
and let me taste the world
like the fly that interprets the wine.

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Handout 15-2a
Br'er Rabbit and Tar Baby

One summer when everything was dry, Br'er Fox and Br'er Bear decided that they needed to dig a well. So they went to all the animals to ask them to help. All of the animals agreed except Br'er Rabbit. He pretended to be sick, but the animals knew that he wasn't. So they said,

"Br'er Rabbit, if you don't help us dig this well, we aren't going to let you drink from it."

"That's fine with me," replied Br'er Rabbit. "I can get by fine drinking the dew."

But as soon as the well was finished, Br'er Rabbit went out every night and drank from it.

The other animals became very angry and decided to try to catch Br'er Rabbit and punish him. Finally they decided to make an animal out of wood and cover it with tar.

They sat the tar baby up by the well, and when Br'er Rabbit came for his drink, he saw that someone was guarding the well.

"Who's there?" he called from the bushes. But the tar baby didn't answer.

"I said, who's there?" said the rabbit, getting bolder and coming out of the bushes. The rabbit walked right up to the tar baby and said in its face, "If you don't answer me, I am going to hit you." But the tar baby didn't say a word.

So the rabbit hit him with his right hand and it stuck. Then he hit him with his left hand and it stuck. Then he hit him with his feet and they both stuck. Soon the rabbit was completely stuck and the other animals came out and picked him up.

"Let's roast him alive," said the fox.

"That's fine with me," said Br'er Rabbit. "I like to be nice and warm and my coat won't burn at all."

"That doesn't sound very good," said Br'er Bear. "Let's hang him from a tree."

"That would be fun," said Br'er Rabbit. "I am so light I could just swing there and enjoy myself."

"That's no good," said Br'er Possum. "Let's throw him in the bramble bush."

Then Br'er Rabbit started to scream. "Don't throw me in there. I am scared of the brambles. They will stick my feet and my eyes!"

While he was still screaming, all the animals picked him up and threw him in the briar patch. As soon as he was safe in the brambles, Br'er Rabbit yelled back, "Thanks a lot. You have thrown me right back to my home!"

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Handout 15-2b
Rabbit and Birdlime Animal

The rabbit and the antelope were once building a well. Early in the morning they both set out with their lunches for the work site. As soon as they arrived, the rabbit offered to put the lunches in a cool place.

The two began to work, but suddenly the rabbit pricked up his ears and said, "I hear people from the village calling me."

"I don't hear a thing," replied the antelope.

"That's because my ears are longer and I can hear better," said the rabbit. "My wife is about to have babies and I had better go."

And the rabbit scampered off to the spot where he had hidden the lunches and ate part of them.

The same thing happened three times during the day, and the rabbit explained that his wife had had several children.

That afternoon when the antelope was ready to eat his lunch, the rabbit went to get it and cried, "Oh, a cat has been here before us and has already eaten our food."

The second day the rabbit played the same trick on the antelope, and this continued until the well was almost finished. Finally the antelope realized what was happening and followed the rabbit. He caught him red-handed with the lunches.

"You have tricked me," yelled the antelope. "I should kill you, but I won't. But to pay for the lunches, you must give me full rights to the well and promise never to drink from it."

The frightened rabbit agreed. But the well had hardly been completed when the antelope began noticing rabbit tracks around it. "That pesky rabbit is trying to trick me again," thought the antelope. "I will show him who is the cleverest."

So the antelope took a piece of wood and carved it into an animal about the size of the rabbit. Then he stuck the wooden animal in the ground near the well and smeared it all over with birdlime.

Soon the rabbit came hopping up. He saw the figure standing there and said, "What are you doing at my well?"

The wooden figure of course said nothing. The rabbit became angry and said, "Answer me or I will hit you."

The wooden figure was still silent and the rabbit hit it with his right hand. His hand stuck. He hit it with his left hand, and it stuck.

"Let me go or I will hit you again," the rabbit shouted. Nothing happened and he hit the figure with both back legs and they stuck. Then he butted it with his head and his stomach. Soon the silly rabbit was completely stuck.

Just then the antelope came up. "So there you are, you silly rabbit," he said. "You will never trick anyone again." And he killed him on the spot.

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from *Myths and Modern Man* by Barbara Stanford, Washington Square Press, 1972
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Handout 15-3
Ibo Folktales

by Eze Nwoji

Stories have specific meaning in the lives of those who tell them. As in traditional cultures throughout the world, the performance of certain tales is associated with specific storytellers. And just as each person knows everybody else's "business" --that is, their personal stories--so everyone is presumed to know all the tales of their group's traditional repertoire.

The Hunter's Tale

There was a hunter who trips over a skull while in pursuit of game and exclaims in wonderment, "What is this? How did you get here?" "Talking brought me here," the skull replies enigmatically. Naturally the hunter is amazed and quickly runs back to his village, exclaiming about what he has found. Eventually, the king hears about this wonder and demands that the hunter take him to see it. They return to the place in the bush where the skull is sitting, and the hunter points it out to his king, who naturally wants to hear the skull's message. The hunter repeats the question: "How did you get here?" but the skull says nothing. The king, angry now, accuses the hunter of deception, and orders his head cut off on the spot. When the royal party departs, the skull speaks out, asking the hunter "What is this? How did you get here?" The head replies "Talking brought me here!"

"The talking skull" reminds us ill-considered talk can often lead to trouble and can even dissipate the vitality of the group.

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Handout 15-4a
Literature

He Who Has Patience Has Everything

A Yoruba Folktale from Nigeria

In the olden days there lived a man who was so poor that he had only one cloth and that was in rags. He had only a single wife, and she was childless. They had no other work to do except collecting firewood in the bush and had no reasonable hope of every improving their condition. Nevertheless, they were content and believed that the future might bring them a better lot.

The poor man also had a friend called Abinuku--he is angry to death--who hated everybody in his heart, but did not show it in his face. The poor man thought he had a friend--but in reality there was nobody to love him, but himself.

The poor man prayed to God for many years, asking him to better his life; when at last the time came that the almighty God was ready to help him, He sent three heavenly creatures to visit the poor man, and they were called Money, Child, and Patience. He told the poor man that he would be allowed to keep one of these wonderful creatures, while the others must be allowed to return to their maker.

The three wonderful creatures accordingly set out on their long and troublesome road from Heaven to Earth. One day they arrived at a large river. The water was cold and deep, but Patience quietly walked through the flood. Then Child said to Money: "I am too weak to cross this river. You are big and strong. Please carry me across." But Money said angrily: "You impudent child! Would you make your senior work for you? It is you who must carry me through the river--or there will be trouble" They were fighting for a long time, but in the end Patience returned and carried them both across.

The three wonderful creatures finally arrived at the poor man's house. They were well received by the poor man, who gave them all the food he could find in his home. The poor man felt pleased and honored by the visit, but when he heard what they were coming about he got worried and confused. He felt quite unable to choose and so he asked the advice of his wife.

"You foolish man," the wife said. "Don't you realise that we need money most of all? If we have a child, what can we feed it on? And if we have patience--what use is that?"

The poor man was still not sure what to do and so he went to his friend Abinuku and asked his advice too. Abinuku was very jealous because the three wonderful creatures had not come to him. He did not want Abinuku to have either money or children and so he advised him to choose Patience. "If you choose Child--you will not have money to feed it. But if you choose Money and you have no child--your property will go to slaves after your death. So you had better have Patience."

(Pause here and decide what you would choose.)

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Handout 15-4b
Literature

The poor man did not know the answer to that and so he went and chose Patience.

His wife was very annoyed when she saw Money and Child leaving the house and Patience settling down to live with them. But the poor man was content and Abinuku secretly triumphed.

Now Money and Child went on their way and they came back to the same river and they began to argue again, who should carry the other across. They quarrelled for a long time, and in the end they decided that, as they were unable to cross the river, they might just as well return to the poor man's house.

When they arrived at the poor man's house there was great happiness and the house became a house of song.

Thus Money and Child will in the end settle down where Patience has made its home. Patience is the father of every good thing in life. But do not misunderstand me my friend, when you sit in your garden and a snake comes to bite you--I am not telling you to be patient then.

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from *Not Even God is Ripe Enough* by Bakare Ghadamosia and Ulli Beier, Heinemann (Oxford) Ltd., London 1994, used by perission of Heinemann (Oxford).

Handout 15-5
Ibgo Proverbs

Collected by Frances Pritchett

1. O bu nwayoo ka e ji aracha ofe di oku.
   Hot soup should be eaten slowly. (Progress requires patience)

2. Nwata oke ije na-aka okenye isi aow ihe ama.
   The well-traveled child knows more than the gray-haired adult.
   (Wisdom is not synonymous with old age.)

3. Onye jee obodo ebi m nti o biri nke ya tinye.
   One who goes to a land where they cut off ears should cut off his own and contribute it. (When in Rome, do as the Romans do.)

4. Onye gbakaaa ute ya o raru n'ala.
   One who tears up his mat has to sleep on the ground.

5. Were chihie choba ewu ojii.
   One should look for a black goat in daylight.

6. Nwanyi ire oma di adighi ajuru ya nri.
   If a woman has a "sweet tongue," her husband does not refuse to eat her food.

7. O ka mma inye enye karja inata anata.
   Giving is better than receiving.

8. Ihe egbe muru agaghi ibu okuko
   The hawk's offspring is bound to be a chicken-stealer.

9. Otu aka ruta mmanu ya ezuo oha onu
   If one finger is put into the oil, the oil spreads to all the others.

10. Ihere na-eme nwanne ori, karja otu a na-eme onye ori.
    The thief's brother feels more shame than the thief himself.

11. Onye were ututu tutuba o we tutujue abo ya.
    He who starts gathering early in the morning will have a full basket.

12. O dighi onye ma afo na—amu onye eze.
    No one knows which womb will give birth to a chief.

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Handout 15-6a
Ogedengbe's Drummers

In the days of constant wars among the kingdoms of the Yorubas, a warrior hero called Ogedengbe lived in the city of Ilesha. Ogedengbe ruled firmly in Ilesha, and in other kingdoms he was feared and repected, for it was said that once he had undertaken war against an enemy he would not relent or turn back until his work was finished. He attacked enemy cities and sacked them, taking gold and slaves as his prize. He pursued his enemies to the most distant places to cut them down. Wherever the fighting was most fierce, there Ogedengbe would be. His name was heard with attention in far-off villages, and, at the rumor that Ogedengbe was approaching, people went away into the bush with their cattle and hid themselves.

In other kingdoms people asked each other, "How can Ogedengbe be disposed of? He is like a plague of ants. He comes out of the bush to eat everything that lies in his path. If Ogedengbe were not loose in the land we could go on living, each man in his fields and each city in its place. But now every city is in danger."

The City of Ibadan was then ruled by another warrior chief called Ogunmola. Ogunmola decided one time that he would attach Ilesha and destroy Ogedengbe. He assembled his army. He prepared to lead the expedition. And when everything was ready Ogunmola's forces set out. They reached the outskirts of Ilesha.

A great battle began. Ogedengbe's warriors met the army from Ibadan in the fields. When night came they resed, but when the sun rose again the battle resumed. The two armies moved from one place to another. They drifted across the land. Other cities became involved. The war spread, leaving suffering and death in its wake. Finally Ogedengbe defeated Ogunmola, who returned with his shattered forces to Obadan.

But Ogedengbe's anger was not yet stilled. It was said that the city of Benin had conspired with Ibadan in the attack against Ilesha. So Ogedengbe decided to punish Benin. He began the expedition. As he rode his white horse his drummers went on ahead. Their drums spoke like this:

> Ogedengbe is coming.
> Ogunmola is finished,
> Now it is Benin's turn.
> Benin, prepare yourself,
> Prepare to bury your corpses."

The sound of the drums was heard far away. Whenever Ogedengbe's army passed through a village there was no sign of human beings and the fields were empty. For everywhere it was said that Ogedengbe's drums and war horns spoke only the truth. When the drums said that Ogunmola had been defeated, everyone agreed that it must be so.

Word of Ogedengbe's approach came to Benin. the ruler of that city met with his counselors to discuss the situation. They sent a messenger to Ogedengbe. He said, "Our people say there is no need to make war on Benin. Benin has done nothing hostile to you. The people know of your courage and achievements and they praise you. Ogedengbe, turn back and leave Benin as it stands. This is the message I have brought you."

Ogedengbe spoke harshly. He said, "It is just as I thought it would be. The City of Benin whimpers like a child. Hear my drums, for they speak only what is true. The drums say, 'Now it is Benin's turn.' Return to the city and tell your Oba what I have said."

The messenger returned to Benin. He reported Ogedengbe's words. Once again the people of Benin sent a messenger to plead with Ogedengbe not to make war on the city. Again Ogedengbe rebuffed the

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messenger. His army arrived at Benin, surrounded the city and dug a moat around it to prevent the inhabitants from escaping. Benin was besieged. The Oba of Benin, the sub discussed their situation. They foresaw that the city would be destroyed and their army defeated. While some said, "Let us go out and fight." others said, "No. Listen to Ogedenge's drums. They recall his great victories over other cities. They speak only what is true."

After the argument had been going on this way for a long time, oneo f the elders of Benin said, "Can Ogedengbe's drums say only one thing? What are drums, after all? They are objects made of wood and hide. They say only what drummers make them say. Ogedengbe's drums can say other things. They can speak of Benin's greatness also."

People answered, "Now, Ogedengbe's drummers are dear to his heart, for the words their drums speak remind him to be courageous, and his warriors also take courage from the sound. Why, then would the drummers make their drums tell of Benin's greatness?"

The elder answered, "I will tell you about this thing.. The drummers play what pleases Ogedengbe because he pays them well. Does a musician live who does not play what he is paid for? Very well. Let us be patrons to the drummers."

The people saw merit in it. They collected cowries from whoever had cowries, and the Oba and the subchiefs gave the greatest share. They appointed a message. In the dark of night a messenger took the cowries and went out of the city to the place where the drummers were resting.

The messenger said to them, "Your drumming has been heard. In the city the people have praised it. They say you are truly great musicians and poets. The tones of your drums are so perfect that no one can mistake their meanings. The people of Benin would like you to drum something for them before the battle begins tomorrow. For this small deed they will give you ten thousand cowries."

The drummers talked among themselves. They agreed. They asked," What do you want our drums to say?"

"Why," the messenger said, "just a small phrase. Have your drums say, "When has Benin ever been defeated? Have them say, 'Never has Benin been walked on by its enemies,' " He gave the drummers the ten thousand cowries and went back to the city.

The light of the morning sun began to be visible. Ogedengbe ordered his warriors to prepare for battle. They made themselves ready for the attack. Ogedengbe mounted his horse. The drums began to play. But instead of reciting Ogedengbe's praise names and recalling his great deeds the drums said:

"When has Benin ever been defeated?
Never has Benin been walked on by its enemies."

All in Ogedengbe's camp heard the drums and were surprised. Anger filled Ogedengbe as he head the drums say over and over:

"When has Benin ever been defeated?
Never has Benin been walked on by its enemies."

Doubt came to Ogedengbe. He thought, "it is time. Benin has never fallen in war." His fury for battle softened. His warriors with their weapons in their hands, they too were thinking, "Have Ogedengbe's drums every spoken a falsehood? What they say now is no. Benin has never been beaten to the ground. Although it has many enemies, Benin has only survived and grown greater."

Ogedengbe's eagerness to attack Benin diminished, until at last he ordered his fighting men to withdraw to the outskirts of the city. There he had his drummers executed for making their drums says at the very moment of attack, "When has Benin ever been defeated?" After that Ogedengbe and his army returned to Ilesha.

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Handout 15-7a
Isara

Chapter V, Homecoming

First to call was the widow, Mrs. Esan, taking the fight to Akinyode for leaving Morola behind. She had travelled directly from Saki with bales of *eleto eto* cloth and, with great pride, samples of the Saki variant of the imported velvet *petuje*, whose influx on the market had threatened the local weave from Iseyin and Saki. A former trainee teacher under Soditan, she had imbibed some of his resentment at the claimes of this cloth, which the Lagosians had named, with such disloyalty, "the cloth which eclipses *etu*." *Etu*, that noble cloth whose warp and weft spun the very fabric of the history of the Yoruba! Isolated in the Women's Training College to which she had been posted, she thought often of this outrage wrought against the local product by the insensitive elite of Lagos. It was bad enough that this so-called *petuje* should command outrageous prices yet be so much sought-after, but to lord it, in addition, by the sheer power of naming, over a passive product of undisputed worth -- this was augmented thievery, aided and abetted by the shameless children of the house! She was in charge of homecrafts at the training school, and aided by the weavers of Saki and Iseyin, she set up her looms in the school, unravelled the velvet imposter along patterns borrowed from the disparaged *etu*, then filled them in with cotton yarns, based on the original colour motifs. The result was lighter, more porous and therefore more suited to the climate. She named it *eye etu*. She had come home with two full sets of *buba*, *iro*, and *gele* for herself and Mrs. Soditan, sewn from this cloth. Its outing was to be at the New Year in Isara, and what a sensation they would have caused, just the two of them in *eye etu*. Now she was faced with bitter disappointment.

"She is in hospital," Soditan informed her, quietly.

Mrs. Esan was immediately contrite, accusing herself of every crime in the world, as if she should have known in advance. This was followed by renewed alarm at the state of Morola's health. Had no solution been found even now for her recurrent illness?

"She is recuperating," Soditan explained. Her illness was finally diagnosed -- it was pneumonia all this while, suppressed from time to time by the prescriptions but never fully cured. It all came to light when she returned to the naternity clinic for routine testing ..."

"The maternity ..."

Soditan's smile carried a tinge of sheepishness. "Yes, I'm afraid she is pregnant again."

And Mrs. Esan dropped her bag, took off her headtie, flung it round her waist in a loose knot, and began to dance, accompanying herself with her voice.

Mo fe e su're o
Aa se
Mo fe e su're o
Aa se
Iku o ni wo'le to wa
Aa se
Arun ko ni wo'le to wa
Aa yun aa yun a bi rodo
Aa se
Aa bi aa bi a bi rodo
Mo fe e sure o ...

(I wish to pronounce a blessing
So be it
Death will not cross our threshold
Illness will not cross our threshold
Our wombs shall grow big and rounded
Our wombs shall deliver again and again ...)

In vain did the uncertain father-to-be try to shush her, succeeding only when, now fully carried away, she threatened to extend her joy into the street and join up with one of the roving bands of masqueraders whose treble voices identified them as children. Akinyode shut the door firmly on her and proposed instead a glass of Dimple. Restoring the sash to its proper use, Mrs. Esan accepted a glass of pineapple juice instead, toasted the expected child, recited an endless litany of blessings, and predicted the sex on the spot.

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"It's a boy, you will see. And you can only name him Obatunde."

"Sit down, sit down," Akinyode urged. "What is happening in Saki? I felt annoyed with myself afterwards. I should have written to tell you I was making that bicycle tour ... "

"Yes, just imagine my feelings! I would have stayed behind to welcome you. Oh, I felt so cheated! I had kept some salt, too, but had no one through whom to send it. Since I have only a maid living with me, I always have surplus from my ration. And I had carton of Guinea Gold and Capstan cigarettes. Those are the favorites of the *akowe*. Bicycle brand is everywhere, I think -- no problem there. You know Saki is near the Meko garrison, so the soldiers usually sell us their unwanted rations. Or maybe they steal from stores -- that's their own worry. Those favorite brands are scarce now, so I kept some for her. I've left them with Mama at 'Gborobe."

"I shall take them with me when I go back. Thank you."

"I haven't been able to obtain the black thread she wanted -- the flat-packed kind for braiding hair. Only the spindle type is available. She wrote me months ago saying she had run out in the shop -- she should come over, Teacher. As soon as she is better, let her come and stay with me. Then she can choose all the things she wants. There is so much scarcity down here, but we don't do too badly upcountry, you know."

"I'll tell her," Soditan promised. "As soon as she can travel, she will pay you a visit."

Mrs. Esan sipped her juice thoughtfully. Exhausted perhaps from her gyrations, she gradually sank into a pensive mood. It was a good while before Soditan had to admit that her mind had travelled elsewhere, as thoroughly as during her earlier outburst of joy.

"Is there something the matter?"

The visitor sighed. "I don't know, Mr. Soditan. I simply get worried sometimes. You know, we who live on the way to Meko, we see all the movements of these soldiers. We feel the war a lot more over there, perhaps more than in Lagos. And those of us in the trade -- even we part-timers -- we know how everything is affected. Farmers know it, business is undependable. And the training schools -- education, technical, or whatever -- when the students leave, there is no job for them. Even secondary school learners. Well, Teacher, the question I have been asking myself is this: Whose war is this? What is our stake in this quarrel between white people?"

Soditan smiled ruefully. "I wish I could tell you. All I know is that we are caught in it. Unfortunately, we cannot even choose between two evils; one of them has already enveloped us."

"And afterwards?"

"Afterwards, Mrs. Esan, I think you will find that people like Onyah, Akinsanya, Mrs. Kuti, Enahoro, are right. You should read *The West African Pilot* if you can get it in Saki. And the *Daily Times* also. They sometimes echo what Mahatma Gandhi says on the other side of the ocean -- they are in the same boat as we are, you know. One way or the other we all have to choose our destiny -- ourselves. The war will bring things to a head -- for the colonies, and the colonisers. That is what they are saying, and I think they are right."

"But that is the very thing which troubles me, sir. Will these people let go of us? I read what many of our own people have to say about the win-the-war campaign, why they are supporting it. They give that very reason, that the war will set us free. I like to believe it; sometimes I say it myself. But you see, sir, it is that very hope that takes my mind to the many things the white people themselves have written and said. Will this war help them to change their mind? That is my question. Will they have a change of heart? Do you remember, sir, when you used to send me your old journals?"

Soditan nodded.

"Well, I used to copy out some things before returning them -- I won't say from whom I acquired that habit!" Her laughter filled the room as she dug into her handbag and brought out an envelope. From it she extracted two sheets of paper, both copied in her hand writing. "You'll be surprised how many of your former students imitate you in that respect -- and in other ways, too, but I won't tell you which. One of us reads his Bible religiously every night, then follows it with a passage he stole from your notebook -- night after night, the same passage, his wife tells me. He sneaked into your office when you were out -- he was much too scared to ask permission."

Soditan shook his head dispute the last point, but she stuck to it. "Oh yes, we were all a little scared of you sir. Except maybe Miss Olaroumpe." Her eyes danced wildly with mischief. "Do you still hear from her?"

"Sometimes, she sends her old teacher the occasional Christmas greetings."

"Oh no, not so old!" she protested, smoothing out the sheet and holding it to the light from the window. "Shall I read it to you? I am certain it is from *The Elders Review*, although I did not make a note of the source at the time -- not a pass mark, I must say, but I was too emotional over the matter, so I forgot. May I read it, sir? It will help me practise my English -- my pronunciation, I should say. Out there, I have no one to keep me on my toes. I can bomb the English language worse than Hitler and no one will complain." She cleared her throat self-consciously and began to read: "The average West

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Handout 15-7c

African whom I have met is a good chap. I love him. But he has his limitations. He is a merchant, an electrician, a farmer, or a grocery boy, within his bounds he is excellent -- but only within those borders. Occasionally, he shines as a lawyer, a doctor, or a padre -- but only very occasionally. You never find the West African who can invent a big business, such as a steamship line, or a bank, or a railroad. The white man steps in there. The average West African is no more fit to govern his own colonies than the average English member of Parliament of today is to handle any part or portion of the British Empire. If the African were allowed to try, and we, at the pull of our silly sentimentalists, withdrew the home stiffening, how long would it be before chaos reigned? Five years? One? Six months?

She looked up. "Does it ring a bell, sir?"

Akinyode nodded. "Of course it does. That is a constant theme of the colonial tune. Surely you know that."

She nodded vigorously. "Yes, of course, sir. In fact ..."

"Wait. I even think I remember that particular article. That was quite a long time ago. There was heavy correspondence on it afterwards -- mostly from Sierra Leone."

"There was. And most of the letters were from other colonial officers who took that writer's side. I wanted to reply myself but it was around that time you stopped sending me journals."

Akinyode looked rueful. "I'm sorry I didn't keep it up."

"Oh no, there is nothing to be sorry about. You did your work; it was up to us to carry extended families with all their problems. But you see, sir, afterwards something happens, like this war. And one's mind goes back to things one had forgotten, and all the old questions return. If you don't mind, I'll skip the middle and read you the last paragraph. Here it is now. The man says, 'The West African would be well-advised to hug his present vassalage, and indeed pray for it to be firmer in points. Nobody who knows has the smallest idea that the West African Negro can govern himself efficiently. We are not long removed from the blood bath and the crucifixion tree of Benin city,"

"So, there you are, sir. Somewhere in between, the man even says that he couldn't care a bean if virile nations take us over, just like propery, that if native West African rule were set up, it would be ... please, let me just find that place ... yes ... he says it would be a 'blood-and-iron affair' which would apply 'whips and scorpions with a steady hand.' The long and short of it, Mr. Soditan, is this, to my way of thinking. If these people have already made up their mind about us, why should we worry about who wins their war and ends up with us as property?"

Soditan walked over to her, took the lined, handwritten sheet, which showed its nine or ten years' aging, and reread the entire extract himself. He felt strangely moved. "And you copied it at the time?" he asked.

"Yes, Mr. Soditan. You see, you underlined it. In red. If I had the magazine in my hand now, I would point exactly where the paragraphs were on the page, even if I was blindfolded."

He laughed. "And you want to tell me that in between trading in eleto eto, dried fish, yams, and gari together with my wife, plus your teaching schedule, you actually found the time to recollect these ... er, jottings and engage in battle with colonial powers?"

"And the matter of Abyssinia, Mr. Soditan. What sort of a place is that League of Nations? Yes, they should be called that. They are all in league against us, the black people!"

Soditan nodded slowly. "When you next come to Abeokuta, tell your partner to take you to meet Mrs. Kuti. You know Beere, don't you?"

Mrs. Esan's eyes sparkled. "Who doesn't, Teacher, who doesn't?"

Ah, sorry, sir. I forgot to give you this." She handed over the other sheet of paper. "Please find time to read it, and let me know what you think. I tried out parts of it at the synod last week, in Lagos. I hope you won't disown me when you learn of the reactions. Please look it over for me before I send it to *The West African Pilot*. I really would appreciate your corrections, Mr. Soditan."

"All right. I will."

She stood up, looking elated. "Now I must go and catch my home customers. They are all waiting for their Christmas stock and if I don't get rid of what I've brought before the Lagos people come in ..."

"Of course, of course. I am only sorry again that Morola could not come. I know you would have done your rounds together."

"I'll manage. And I've kept her own goods separate. I have sorted out the ones which are for New Year sales; I'll sell them for her and send her the takings."

Soditan watched her depart, then remained by the door looking out into the village as dusk gathered. He felt very strange after the visit. He could not remember when he had exchanged so many words with the woman alone; usually she came to see his wife, who was perhaps her major trading partner. Beyond a comment or casual exchange over some immediate event or news, they had not spoken much together since she had completed her practical teaching course under him and was sent off to Saki. There she met and married her husband, a native of Ondo, also a co-teacher. He contracted tuberculosis and

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Handout 15-7d

later died. For a number of years afterwards she would not even return home, so terrified were people of the disease and its reputed contagion. To make matters worse, they had lost their first two children, although not to the same disease. Later, as a year passed, then two, and it became clear that she had not fallen victim to the disease -- which, it was widely assumed, she must have caught from her husband through living together as man and wife -- her return became easier and she reintegrated herself into the community, fully. But to have noted and kept that article, which had so outraged him at the time, yet divided his feelings on the cautionary grounds of that dire prediction, the "whips and scorpions," stolen from the Bible...

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Handout 15-8a
Anthills of the Savannah

Beatrice had decided on a sudden inspiration to hold a naming ceremony in her flat for Elewa's baby-girl. She did not intend a traditional ceremony. Indeed except in name only she did not intend ceremony of any kind. It seemed to her unlikely from the look of things that she could face anything remotely resembling a ceremony for a long, long time.

But a baby had to have a name, and there seemed nothing particularly wrong in giving it one in the company of a few friends or doing it on the seventh market as tradition prescribed. Every other detail, however, would fall into abeyance, for this was a baby born into deprivation--like most, of course; but unlike most it was not even blessed with an incurably optimistic sponsor ready to hold it up on its naming day and call it *The-one-who-walks-into-abundance* or *The one-who-comes-to-eat* or suchlike and then blithely hand it back to its mother to begin a wretched trudge through life, a parody of its own name. No, this baby would not lie in cushioned safety from the daily stings of the little ants of the earth floor. Indeed it was already having to manage without one necessity even the poorest may take for granted--a father (even a scarecrow father would have sufficed) to hold it in his hands and pronounce its name on this twenty-eighth day of its life.

Beatrice had asked the same handful of friends who had kept together around her like stragglers from a massered army. That she even managed this residual relationship was a measure of the change she had begun to undergo even before the violent events of the recent past; that she did it in virtual silence an eloquent tribute to the potency of lost causes.

When Elewa moved up to Beatrice and whispered into her ear what she had just come to suspect as the probable reason for her mother not being there yet Beatrice decided to perform the naming herself and to do it right away. She called the little assembly to order and proceeded to improvise a ritual.

She picked up the tiny bundle from its cot and, turning to Elewa, said: "Name this child."

"Na you go name am."

"OK. You just saved a false step, anyway. Thanks. I will start afresh . . . There was an Old Testament prophet who named his son *May-the-path-never-close*. Ama for short."

"But that's a boy's name."

"No matter."

"Girl fit answer am also."

"It's a beautiful name. The Path of Ikem."

"That's right. May it never close, never overgrow."

"Das right!"

"May it always shine! The Shining Path of Ikem."

"Dat na wonderful name."

"Na fine name so."

"In our traditional society," resumed Beatrice, "the father named the child. But the man who should have done it today is absent . . . Stop that sniffling, Elewa! The man is not here although I know he is floating around us now, watching with that small-boy smile of his. I am used to teasing him and I will tease him now. What does a man know about a child anyway that he should presume to give it a name . . ."

"Nothing except that his wife told him he is the father," said Abdul, causing much laughter.

"Na true my brother," said Braimoh. "Na woman de come tell man say no him born the child. Then the man begin make *inyanga* and begin answer father. Na *yeye* father we be."

"Exactly. So I think our tradition is faulty there. It is really safest to ask the mother what her child is or means or should be called. So Elewa should really be holding Ama and telling us what she is. What it was like to be loved by that beautiful man Ikem. But Elewa is too shy. Look at her!"

"I no shy at all," she replied, her eyes smiling and holding back tears at the same time like bright sunshine through a thin drizzle. "I no shy but I no sabi book."

"Dis no be book matter, my sister."

"You no sabi book but you sabi plenty thing wey pass book, my dear girl."

"Say that again," said Emmanuel.

"I concur," said Captain Medani.

"Dat na true word," said Braimoh.

"I tell you!" said Aina.

"All of we," continued Beatrice, "done see *baad* time; but na you one, Elewa, come produce something wonderful like this to show your sufferhead. Something alive and kicking."

"That's true, Very true," said the Captain.

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Excerpt from *Anthills of the Savannah* by Chinua Achebe. Used by permission of Doubleday, Anchor Books

Handout 15-8b
Anthills of the Savannah

"But living ideas . . ." Emmanuel began haltingly.

"Ideas cannot live outside people," said Beatrice rather peremptorily stopping him in mid-stride. He obeyed for a second, scratched his head and came right back blurting defiantly:

"I don't accept that. The ideas in one lecture by Ikem changed my entire life from a parrot to a man."

"Really?"

"Yes, really. And the lives of some of my friends. It wasn't Ikem the man show changed me. I hardly knew him. It was his ideas set down on paper. One idea in particular: that we may accept a limitation on our actions but never, under no circumstances, must we accept restriction on our thinking."

"OK," said Beatrice bowing to this superior, unstoppable passion. "I have also felt what you are saying, though I knew him too as a man. You win! People and Ideas, then. We shall drink to both of them."

As Agatha brought in a tray of drinks and burst into one of the songs of her sect--something with which she had never before graced this house--Emmanuel took the tray from her and placed in on the centre table. Adamma fetched the glasses and they began to serve. Agatha's hands freed meanwhile found more fitting occupation clapping her own accompaniment, and her waist swayed in slow dance.

Jehova is not a person anyone can deceive
Jehova is so great who is it can confuse him?
If Jehova wants to bless who will dare to raise a curse?
Jehova-jireh let us raise his name!

Ama raised herself from her seat, untied and re-tied her outer *lappa* and joined Agatha in her holy seductive dance.

"Abi Aina no be Moslem?" Beatrice asked Elewa in a whisper.

"Na proper grade one Moslem," she replied wondering by way of a puzzled look what the point of the question was. Then she seemed all of a sudden to discern the questioner's difficulty. "Dem talk say make Moslem no dance when Christian de sing?" she asked in return.

"No I didn't mean *that*," replied Beatrice rather emphatically. But to herself she said, "Well, if a daughter of Allah could join his rival's daughter in a holy dance, what is to stop the priestess of the unknown god from shaking a leg?" She smiled to herself. She was already swaying her head from side to side in lieu of hands which were still attempting to rock Ama to sleep.

After five or six repeats of the same words of the catchy little song Braimoh shouted: "Heep! Heep! Heep!" and the ecumenical fraternization was neatly terminated with a lustly "Hooray!" and laughter.

It was at this point that a taxi pulled up outside and discharged Elewa's mother and uncle. Beatrice and Elewa turned spontaneously to each other, one saying, "You were right," and the other, "I no tell you!", at the same time.

Beatrice knew Elewa's uncle by an unsavoury reputation which he now seemed quite determined to live up to. Before he fairly sat down his eyes had become glued to the tray of drinks and his Adam's apple danced restlessly like the trapped bubble in a brick-layer's spirit-level.

"Elewa, won't you offer a drink to Mama and your uncle?"

Mama accepted a bottle of mineral water but the uncle declined the beer which was offered him demanding "Snaps" instead. When he was told there was no schnapps in the house he merely said, "Ah?"--a compressed but eloquent way of saying: A naming ceremony indeed, without schnapps.

Beatrice got up, put the baby down in her cot, went to the sideboard and soon returned with a bottle of White Horse whisky. Elewa's uncle accepted the substitute quite readily and proceeded to swill two thimblefuls in quick succession throwing his head slightly back for the operation and working his cheeks like a pair of bellows before swallowing. He put the glass down and then asked for a bottle of beer.

Looking sideways at her late husband's half-brother Elewa's mother said. "It is better that we begin the work we cam to do. I don't want anyone dropping my grandchild."

"Nobody is going to drop anybody," replied the uncle lifting his glass of beer to his lips with a lightly quivering hand . . . "Drink does not loosen a man's grip. It makes it stronger," he added after gulping down half of the glass . . . "But since my wife here is troubled, let us agree with her and do as she says. A wise man agrees with his wife and eats lumps of cocoyam."

Abdul's head was tilted towards Emmanuel who was translating the old people for him. Now all eyes turned to Beatrice. She had picked up the baby again, but instead of handing her to the old man who had set down his glass once more to receive it she said:

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Handout 15-8c
Anthills of the Savannah

"This baby has already received its name. She is called Amaechina."

The old people were visibly stunned. The man recovered first and asked: "Who gave her the name?"

"All of us here," said Beatrice.

"All of you here," repeated the old man. "All of you are her father?"

"Yes, and mother."

His explosion into laughter took everybody by surprise and then dragged them all into his bombshell of gaiety. Except Elewa's mother.

"You young people," said the old man. "What you will bring this world to is pregnant and nursing a baby at the same time . . . Give me a little more of that hot drink."

Elewa rushed the whisky bottle and the little glass back to him.

"A jolly old fellow," said Abdul.

"You no know am. So make you wait small."

Elewa's poor mother was left high and dry carrying the anger of outraged custom and usage made none the lighter for having no one to focus it on. In the end she turned and heaped it on the opportunistic old man, a medicine-man hired to chase evil spirits whom evil spirits were now chasing.

"You will return my bottle of Snaps and the fowl," she said to him, to everyone's surprise. His face clouded over for a very brief instant and quickly cleared up again.

"As to that," he said, "What is brought out before a masquerade cannot be taken indoors again. Food goes one way--downwards. If you see it going up you know the man is in trouble."

"You will return my Snaps and the fowl," she repeated obstinately.

"Listen to me my wife and let me give you advice. You are annoyed and I cannot say that I blame you. But what is the use of bending your neck at me like the chicken to the pot when its real enemy is not the pot in which it cooks nor even the fire which cooks it but the knife. Your quarrel is with these young people. Hold your daugher and her friends to refund to you your bottle of Snaps and your fowl. But as for the tribute placed in front of a masquerade, that one is gone with the masquerade into its anthole." He went into another paroxysm of laughter scraping his sides which he now held like a loosening bundle between his palms. Everyb ody joined him once more, except Elewa's mother. He stopped abruptly and turned to the rest:

"Let me tell you people something. When my wife here came to me and said: Our daughter has a child and I want you to come and give her a name, I said to myself: Something is amiss. We did not hear *kpom* to tell us that the palm branch has been cut before we heard *waa* when it crashed through the bush. I did not hear of bride-price and you are telling me about naming a child. But I did not contradict my wife because I want fish in my soup . . . Do you know why I am laughing like this? I am laughing because in you young people our world has met its match. Yes! You have put the world where it should sit . . . My wife here was breaking her head looking for kolanuts, for alligator pepper, for honey and for bitter-leaf . . ."

"And Snaps and agriculture chicken."

"True. Those as well. And while she is cracking her head you people gather in this whiteman house and give the girl a boy's name . . . That is how to handle this world . . . If anybody thinks that I will start a fight because somebody has done the work I should do that person does not know me. I only fight when somebody else eats what I should eat. So I will not fight. Rather I will say thank you. I will say whoever ate the foofoo let him mop up the soup as well. A child has been named. What else is one looking for at the bottom of the soup-bowl if not fish? Wherever the child sleeps let it wake up in the morning, is my prayer . . . My wife, where is that kolanut? I shall break it after all."

Everybody applauded this strange man's sudden decision, sparked off perhaps by the utterance of the word prayer. Elewa's mother could not keep up against the powerful current in favour of the old man. She opened her bag and handed a kolanut to him.

"Elewa, go and wash this and put it into a plate and bring me water to wash my hands."

Elewa and Agatha went into the kitchen to do as the old man had commanded. After he had washed his hands and wiped them importantly with a sparkling napkin that contrasted so harshly with his own dirt-and-sweat-tarnished jumper that used to be of white lace he assumed a sacramental posture, picked up the kolanut in his right hand and held it between four fingers and thumb, palm up, to the Almighty.

"Owner of the world! Man of countless names! The church people call you three-in-one. It is a good name. But it carries miserly and insufficient praise. Four-hundred-in-one would seem more fitting in our eyes. But we have no quarrel with church people; we have no quarrel with mosque people. Their intentions are good, their mind on the right road. Only the hand fails to throw as straight as the eye sees. We praise a man when he slaughters a fowl so that if his hand becomes stronger tomorrow he will slaughter a goat . . .

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Handout 15-8d
Anthills of the Savannah

"What brings us here is the child you sent us. May her path be straight . . ."
"*Ise!*" replied all the company.
"May she have life and may her mother have life."
"*Ise!*"
"When I asked who named her they told me All of Us. May this child be the daughter of all of us."
"*Ise!*"
"May all of us have life!"
"*Ise!*"
"May these young people here when they make the plans for their world not forget her. And all other children."
"*Ise!*"
"May they also remember useless old people like myself and Elewa's mother when they are making their plans."
"*Ise!*"
"We have seen too much trouble in Kangan since the white man left because those who make plans make plans for themselves only and their families."
Abdul was nodding energetically, his head bent gently towards his simultaneous translator, Emmanuel.
"I say, there is too much fighting in Kangan, too much killing. But fighting will not begin unless there is first a thrusting of fingers into eyes. Anybody who wants to outlaw fights must first outlaw the provocation of fingers thrust in eyes."
"*Ise! Ise!!*"
Abdul, a relative stranger to the kolanut ritual, was carried away beyond the accustomed limits of choral support right into exuberant hand-clapping.
"I have never enetered a house like this before. May this not be my last time."
"*Ise!*"
"You are welcome any time," added Beatrice following Abdul's breaking of ritual bounds.
"If something pursues us we shall escape but if we pursue something we shall catch it."
"*Ise!*"
"As long as what we pursue does not belong to somebody else."
"*Ise!*"
"Everybody's life!"
"*Ise!*"
"The life of Bassa!"
"*Ise!*"
"The life of Kangan."
"*Ise!*"

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16. Languages of West Africa

contributions by Alex Darkwah, Zinse Agginie and Bettina Fletcher

Subject: English

Objectives:

1. Students will recognize the linguistic diversity of West Africa.

2. Students will recognize some of the varieties of English spoken in West Africa and understand why they are different from American English.

Materials:

Handouts, Pronunciation of African Words from introduction and name lists from Lesson 7 if students do not already have them.
Handouts 16-1, 16-2, and 16-3

Activities:

1. Ask students if they have ever tried to learn a foreign language or have tried to communicate in a foreign country. What do you do when you don't know the word in another language? Ask students what is the hardest part of speaking a foreign language--vocabulary, grammar or pronunciation? Make sure that someone brings out that pronunciation is different—and even if you know the words they may sound different.

Go over the pronunciation of African words handout if you have not done so in a previous lesson. Use the list of African names from Lesson 7 to practice.

Explain that when people interact with people who speak another language, they often develop a language which combines words from one language with grammar and pronunciation from the other. Such a language is called a pidgin language. Several varieties of pidgin English and French developed in West Africa and the Caribbean.

2. Point out that most educated Africans speak at least two and often five or six languages. Many speak their native tribal language such as Ibo or Fulani and may speak several more languages as well as English or French. Even uneducated people may speak three or four African languages and a simplified form of English or French.

3. Pass out the handout on African Languages and discuss the essay. Hand out the linguistic family of Twi chart. Explain that the chart is read like a family tree. Have students locate the languages of the ethnic groups that they have studied such as the Yoruba, Igbo and Mande.

4. Pass out the handout on Rebeka Layye in Twi. Have students use the pronunciation chart to sound out the words and read a paragraph or so aloud. The translation is in lesson four.

Review examples of words and names from African languages from Lesson 7. Ask students if they can figure out some characteristics of African languages from looking at names. For example, they might notice that names often end in vowels. There are often unusual combinations of consonants. Many of the names, particularly in Yoruba or Ibo, are compound words. Students may be able to figure out a few of the roots.

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5. Many people who have little experience with other cultures have difficulty understanding Africans speaking English even when they are speaking standard English until they get used to the pronunciation. Most Africans who come to the U.S. will speak standard English, not pidgin, but their pronunciation may be different from that of American English. Point out to students that learning to understand dialects of English from around the world has the same value as learning a foreign language. If you are having an African speaker or are playing a videotape with an African speaker, make the following suggestions to students. Have students try out the two dialogues of pidgin English. Pronounce the words as they are spelled.

Usually words and grammar will be the same, though most West Africans have learned British English and will have the same differences Britians do. Pronunciation and rhythm of speech may be quite different. Vowels are generally broader—for example a word an American may pronounce with a short "a" may be pronounced "ah."

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Handout 16-1a
African Languages
by Zinse Aginnie

West Africans often speak three languages, and many speak five or six languages. A typical educated West African will speak his or her mother tongue, two or three other African languages, and two versions of English or French, or both.

There are several hundred different languages spoken in the eighteen countries of West Africa from Senegal to Cameroon. Most of these languages belong to the Niger-Kordofanian language family.

In each West African country there are four or more major ethnic groups with their own languages. These languages may or may not be related, and may each have several subdivisions, some of which sometimes bear little resemblance to the main language. In West Africa, as indeed in other parts of Africa, communication problems may arise every few miles because of the language change.

One way to overcome the problem of so many languages is to learn the local lingua franca, which is usually the language of the European colonial power which occupied the area. This may be English, French or Portuguese.

French is spoken over a wider area of West Africa than any other European language, but English is spoken by more people. This is because the principal European language in Nigeria, with its 110-115 million people, is English. Other countries where English is widely spoken are Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia. French is spoken in such countries as Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Senegal.

The traveler who wants to communicate with ordinary people as well as educated teachers and officials must learn a second version of French or English.
Well-educated West Africans speak French or British English. However, most people speak what is called a pidgin or creole version of these languages.

A pidgin language develops when people who speak two languages come together and try to communicate. English itself developed through mixtures of
varieties of Anglo-Saxon, Scandanavian languages, and French.

West African pidgin languages usually include primarily English or French words, but with a simplified grammar and African pronunciation and intonation. In Sierra Leone the divergence from English grew so great that the linguists designated this as a new language, called Krio.

The pidgins are quite colorful and often include many words from local African languages. People speaking pidgins often use a lot of gestures and words that sounds like what they are describing. The pidgin spoken in Lagos is considered to be a particularly interesting one.

The following dialogues illustrate pidgin English in two countries.

Dialogue One: Two people greeting each other in Liberia by Bettina Fletcher

Person One: Awh di bodi?

Person Two: Di bodi no bad.

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Handout 16-1b

Person One: You say you de go?

Person Two: Ade go na makit.

(Translation: How are you? (How's the body?) Not bad. You say you're going? I'm going to the market.

Dialogue Two: Greeting in Ghana by Zinse Agginie

Person One: Where yuh de go? (Where are you off to?)

Person Two: I do go for makit (I am off to the market)

Person One: Na waytin you de go do for makit? (What are you going to do at the market?)

Person Two: I de go find my pikin, him mother get 'am. (To pick up my child. He is with his mother.)

Person One: Wait small. I go go wib yuh. (Wait a little, I'll go with you.)

Person Two: Brother na so oh! (Okay brother, that'll work!"

Dialogue Three: A Courtroom in West Africa by Zinse Agginie

Policeman for the Prosecution: I dey na guide ooh for christofo na road. I hear gbodogbodo! gblon gblon! na gbloga! I run kata-kiti-kati-kiti go there, Na waytin I see? Motor tanya, policeman lying, im blood de comot like water.

2nd Policeman for Prosecution: I dey gib traffic for road. Planty lorry de come but one truck he de make bubunyaa, he come pass fioi like aframa so so akpeteshi. He knock me, I go hit govmenti takari kporu gbann . . . . . .

Translation:
Policeman for the Prosecution: I was on patrol on Christian road when I heard a crash. I ran over. To my amazement I saw a crushed motorcycle and a policeman lay there with blood oozing out like water.

2nd Policeman: I was on traffic duty on the road. Several vehicles passed by. One truck suddenly appeared from nowhere and zoomed past like air. You could smell the liquor all over. With a loud bang, it knocked me straight into a government telegraph pole.

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Handout 16-2
Language Tree
by Dr. Alex Darkwah

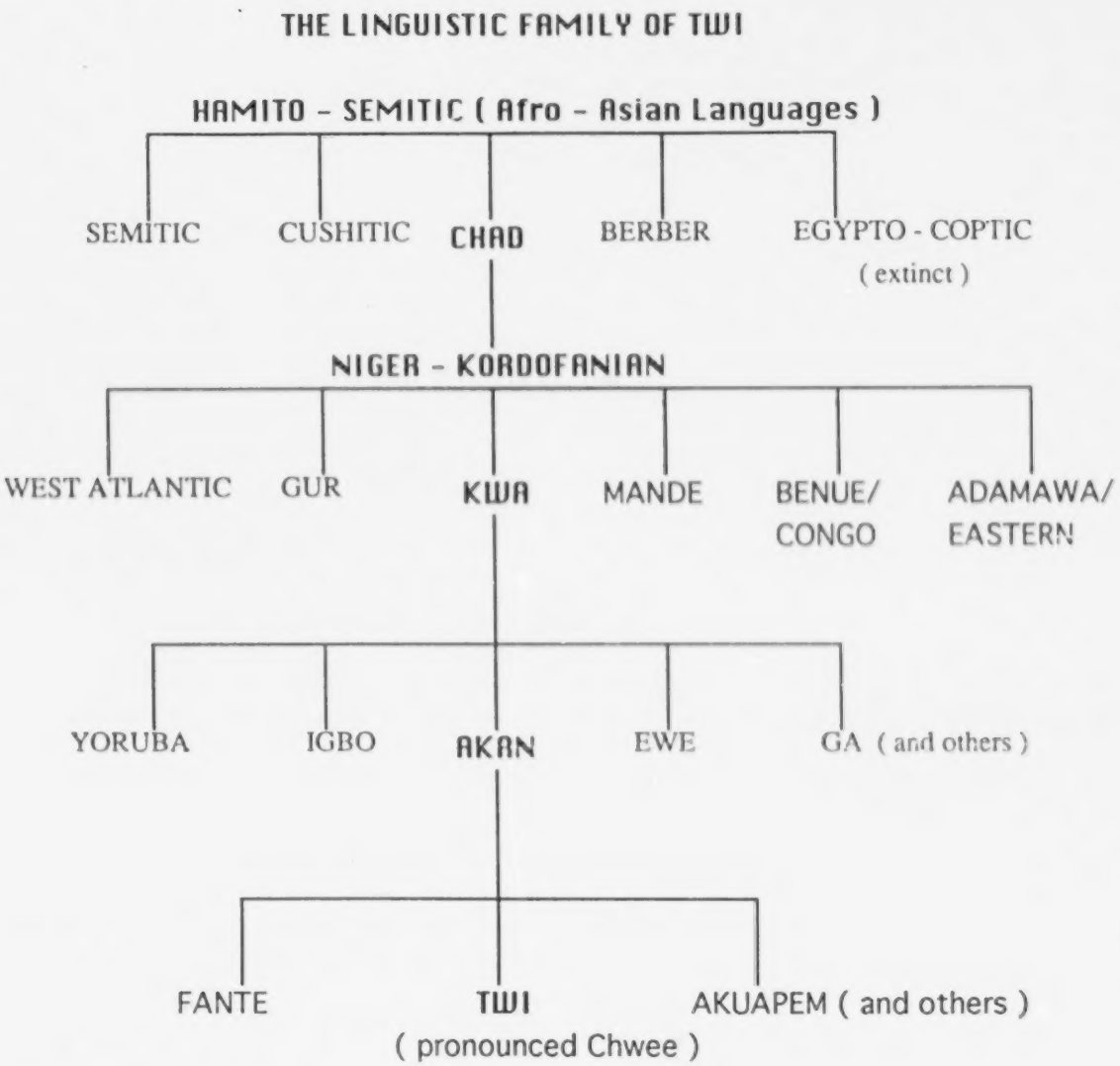

Fig.1 Designed with information from Encyclopaedia Brittanica Macropaedia Vol. 22 p. 577-578, 1988.

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Handout 16-3

Rebɛka Laayɛ: Nkɔso Pa Akwan Foforo

Following is the profile of Rebecca Laryea in Twi, one of the main local languages of her country, Ghana.

Eno Rebɛka Laaye fi Katamanso akuraa. Akuraa yi bɛn Nkran, Ghana kuropɔn. Efi akuraa hɔ kɔ Nkran yɛ akwansin aduonu-abien. Ɔbaa panyin yi mpɔntu wɔ aduakua mu nti Siwisifo Kuatuo apaw n'akuraa hɔ sɛ wɔde nnawɔtwe abien debeyi Kuadwumadi abɛde mu oyikyerɛ. Ne mpɔntu bɛyɛ mfe abien nti.

Rebɛka adi mfe aduanan-akron, na ogyedi sɛ anuonyiam a ɛte sɛɛ apue no so wɔ ne nsiyɛ ne n'adwuma den mu. Nea ɔtaa ka ne sɛ, "Memmfa me Kuadwuma nto fam da, efisɛ ɛno na aboa me ama matumi ada badu kɛtɛ so, de ahwɛ me mma. Midua me nnɔbae mmere pa mu na m'ani ne ɛa da ho berebiara."

Ɔbaa yi mmfa kuayɔ nni mmabaasɛm. Odi n'adwuma yi mu adannan sɛnea ɛbɛma ne nnɔbae afi. Afedan ni no, ne nsano adwuma yii nsɛnkyerɛnne akɛse, ma ɔka detu ne ho sɛ, ne bankye ne amankani a otui ne aburow a otwae no ɔnnka mmfammɔ serɛ mu.

Mfe pii atwam no, na anka ɔde asango gow n'asase no depia ne kuayɔ. Esiane sɛ ne sika atwa aprefi kakra nti ɔkae se, "Mede anantwi ananyaa bɛyɛ me sango, efisɛ ne nya yɛ fow. Afei nso sɛ mede nyansapɔn ne osuahu a minyae wɔ Siwisifo Kuatuo yikyerɛ asɛ no nso deyɛ mfatoho a, metumi atɛw me nnɔbae."

"Wɔkyerɛɛ me sɛnea sɛ midua Dukana nnua a, metumi adua nnɔbae ahorow de adi wɔn ananwuram, na afe akyi no matwa nnua yi nnubaa de afura asase no ani ama awura; afei na asɔfiri no nso betwiw afa so ɔfuntum asase no ama manya asango. ɲi remma me ntɔ asango bio." Wahu nea mekyerɛ yi?" Hwɛ, ɛbɛma masie sidi mpem-aduanan ɔbɛbere biara!" Saa sikakora yi bɛboa ama manya akyi mpem-aduosɔn — me nsa mu bɛyɛ huam ɔbɛbere biara mu.

Eno Laaye di ne ho adanse sɛ sika yi bi ara na ɔdebɛboa ne mma baanu adesua efisɛ ne mma mpanyimfo no boa kuayɔ, ama wɔn mu biako resuade wɔ Kuayɔ Adesuabea Kunini no mu; ne kunu nso apam turo bi.

Eno Laaye agya ne ɔhene wɔ akuraa a ɔyɛ hɔ kua no; wadua mmako, aborɔtɔ, wɔ afuw no mu, bankye, amankani ne atoko, adua nso wɔ fa bi.

Eno Laaye anidaso ara ne sɛ nnɔbae befi na sika nso abedi ne nsam. Esiane sɛ asusow antue afe dan ne afe yi mu nti, ɔsrɛɛ asase kakra wɔ asuka bi ho dɔw n'afuw na nnɔbae fii ɔftw so.

Mmako a wadua no fi a, obuw na wahyɛ no san, na watɔn no aboɔden bere a ɛho akɔwɛn. Nokwarem, sɛ okuafo tɔn ne nnɔbae ɔbɛbere mu a, ɛbɛ tɔ da na ne nsa asi fam, efisɛ aguadifo asapate soma nanasefo kɔ wɔn atɔ ma gua ani-fura. Sɛ akuafo yi hu wɔn nsisi akyi-kwan pɛ na aguadifo yi ayi wɔn akwa —, kɔpem bere a wobenya akuafo a wɔyɛ mmerɛw abu wɔn kɔn mu.

Ɔbaa Laaye kyerɛɛ sɛ, da bi a gua amfi no, akuafo pii tow wɔn aborɔtɔ gu, efisɛ wonni afiri a wɔdetwe nnɔbae no kɔ wɔn atrae, afei nso wonni san a wɔde wɔn nnɔbae bɛhyɛ so. Esiane ne saa nti akuafo a ɛwɔ Eno mpɔtam hɔ asi wɔn gua sɛnea aguadifo bɛba hɔ abedigua.

Ɛyɛ nokware sɛ, sɛ Eno Laaye hyɛ ne nnɔbae no san a eye de, nanso esiane sɛ onni sanfiri, na nekunu nso nsam nnyɛduru nti, ɔtaatɔn ne nnɔbae no bi ɔbɛbere mu sɛnea obenya sika de abɔ akɔnhama ne bi apia mmofra no adesua mu akatua. Nnɔbae no sanhyɛ de bi apia nkamfuaw, Eno daakye anidaso kɛse ne sɛnea ɔne ne mma benya abɛn asu bi ho anya nsu, ogya ne gyabiriw, efisɛ sɛ nsu ho kɔwɛn a, ne mma no di amia wɔ wɔn nnwumadi mu wɔ afum ne adesuabea.

Rebɛka Laaye se, "Memmfa me Kuadwuma nto fam da, efisɛ ɛno na aboa me ama matumi ada badu kɛtɛ so, de ahwɛ me mma. Midua me nnɔbae bere pa mu, me nsa nso da ho berebiara."

Ɔbaa Laaye bɔmmɔden sɛ ɔde anantwinini ne asɔfiri befuntum n'asase no sen sɛ ɔde asɔworowa bedi no awerekade; n'asekyerɛ ne sɛ-afedan no ɔfum anantwinini ma wɔyɛɛ n'afuw mu nnwumaden enti wantew sika antua asɔfiri wuranom dwumadi. Ose, nokwarem, dwumadi no de, "Ɛyɛ me ahosɛpɛw, na ɔkyena bi no, mennsrɛ obiara asɔfiri bio." Ɔkyerɛɛ sɛ, ɛsɛ sɛ Abibirim Akuafo de nsiyɛ, anidaho bra ne anuɔden de nsakrae pa ayɛ wɔn kuadwuma.

Afe dan ɔbɛbere mu no, akwanhyia too Eno Laaye. Aprako aweremfo bi tow hyɛ ne nnɔbae so, sɛe n'afuw ma odii huanmɔ. Eyi ammu n'abaw mu, na mmom nea ɔkae ne sɛ, "Ɛsɛ me nisuhan; m'apamden ne sika ahwere."

Ɔtew sika kakra a wakora ama ne ba adesua, de bi toɔɔ ne kua ho nnewa sɛnea obetumi agyina nenan so bio. Nyhira ne nkɔso fii mu; ne tia ne sɛ, ne ba nyaa adesua mu nkɔso dwetiri detoaa n'adesua so,. Eno nso nyaa abodin wɔ ne kuadwuma ho. ■

— *Margaret Safo*

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From *The African Farmer*. Used by permission of the Hunger Project.

17. AYO

contribution by Lenora Murray

Subject: Mathematics

Overview:

This lesson will introduce West African culture into the mathematics curriculum through use of the game AYO.

Objectives:

1. Student will be able to identify the name and location of at least three different countries where the game is played.
2. Student will be able to play the game of AYO with another.

Materials and preparation needed:

For first-time players, materials should include enough copies of the rules handout for everyone, an overhead projector with a simple overhead sheet of an AYO board, and one egg carton and 48 beans for each two people.

Once the rules are learned, the only supplies needed are an egg carton and 48 beans. I prefer pinto beans, but any counting objects may be used: small pebbles, game pieces from other games, marbles, or whatever.

When introducing AYO for the first time, have a map or globe available to show the students graphically that AYO is a worldwide game, not just a Nigerian game. Mention some of the places and names used for the game. If possible, have a few pictures of ancient game boards available for students.

Activities:

1. The game you'll learn today is played in many parts of the world. It has many variations throughout Africa and South America. AYO is played in Nigeria only by males, in a very serious manner, with no interruptions, much as chess is played at times in America. But it's just another of the many similarities of cultures on so many continents.

2. The rules are quite simple, and once a teacher has modeled one or two games (with a student) on the overhead, students can usually play with very little guidance from the teacher. AYO is a purely mathematical game, with no element of chance, so students should learn rapidly. As well as a diversion, the game is a means of developing intuition and problem-solving abilities. The logic and stategy involved can be a challenge as captivating as chess for advanced students.

After students have observed the overhead game, they need to pair off and distribute their beans four to each cup. Either person may start, then the game begins. Since each set of two has a list of rules, requests for teacher help should be minimal.

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Handout 17-1a
AYO

AYO is a board game played by the males in the Yoruba tribe in Nigeria. It is simple to begin learning but has much to offer a serious student of logic, and many variations which are quite complex. It has a rich heritage and is played in many countries throughout Africa, Asia, South America, and West Indies, and the Philippines.

This game is a purely mathematical game, with no element of chance involved. The basic rules are simple, so even very young children can learn quickly. Yet the competition, logic, and strategy required to play well can offer a challenge to even the most advanced students and adults.

In Nigeria, the game is played with seeds that grow wild. The Yoruba and the Igbo both consider the game a serious adult's game. No one talks when the game is in progress. This "game of intelligence" has been played continuously across the globe from the dawn of recorded history to the present time. Other African names for the game are "giuthi" by the Kikuyu, "azigo" or "okwe", by the Igbo of Nigeria, "kpo" by the Vai people in Sierre Leone and Liberia, "owari" by the Ashante of Ghana, "soro" in Tanzania, "lela" by the Kuba people of the Congo, or "mancala", by the Egyptians.

The word "mancala" in Arabic means transferring. Among the Swahili and other tribes in the southern and eastern part of Africa, a variation with four rows is played, called "Bao" in Swahili or "Omweso" by the Ganda of Uganda. Other variations are played throughout Asia, South America and the Philippines.

The game has been documented in ancient cities. History shows it was a game for kings as well as commoners, as shown by ancient game boards found in museums. Game boards have been discovered carved into stone in the great pyramid of Cheops in Egypt. It has been documented in ancient Syria and Athens as well. Trade routes throughout Africa, Asia, and South America are believed to have carried the game worldwide.

Enough of the history. Let's play the game:

AYO, Owari or Mancala Rules:

Players: Two (or two teams)

Object: To have the most counters at the end of the game in his pit

How to play:

To begin, four beans are placed in each cup on a playing board with six holes in each of two rows (an egg carton may be used), and if possible a "capture area" at each end. Players face each other with the board in between them. A player's side of the board includes his six cups and the capture area or "pi"' on his right. Movement is always counter clockwise — to a player's right (when on his own side).

1. The first player removes four counters from any cup on his side and sows them, or places one counter in each consecutive cup to the right until all these counters

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are used. On the first move it is possible, depending on which cup is emptied, to place beans in the opponent's cups. Players do NOT sow counters in either of the pits; these are for captured counters only.

2. The second player removes all the counters from any cup on his side and distributes them similarly around the board. Since cups can hold many counters, it is possible to go around the board more than once during a turn. As players go around the board, they skip the empty cup from which they last removed their counters and leave it empty for that turn.

3. Captures are made as follows:

a. If the last counter a player sows lands in a cup on the opponent's side that contains only one or two counters, that cup is captured. This last counter plus the opponent's counter must total no more than three.

b. When this condition is met, the player is also permitted to take beans from all cups preceding it if:

1) each cup contains two or three counters/beans
2) the cups are on the opponent's side of the board, and
3) the cups are consecutive

c. No move is permitted that would enable the player to capture all of the opponent's counters. Such a move would make it impossible for the opponent to play. When one side of the board is empty and it is the opposing player's turn, that player must move counters to the other side, if possible, so the game can continue. If, however, it is the player's side that is empty, then the game is over. The player who still has counters adds them to his pit.

d. The players may agree to stop. They then take the counters on their side of the board for their own pit, and the player with the most counters wins. (Quit when there are only a few individual pieces left!)

With an egg carton game, students can see they can easily play the game at home. However, if a wood board can be made, the "pits" can be put at the ends, which is the truly African board game.

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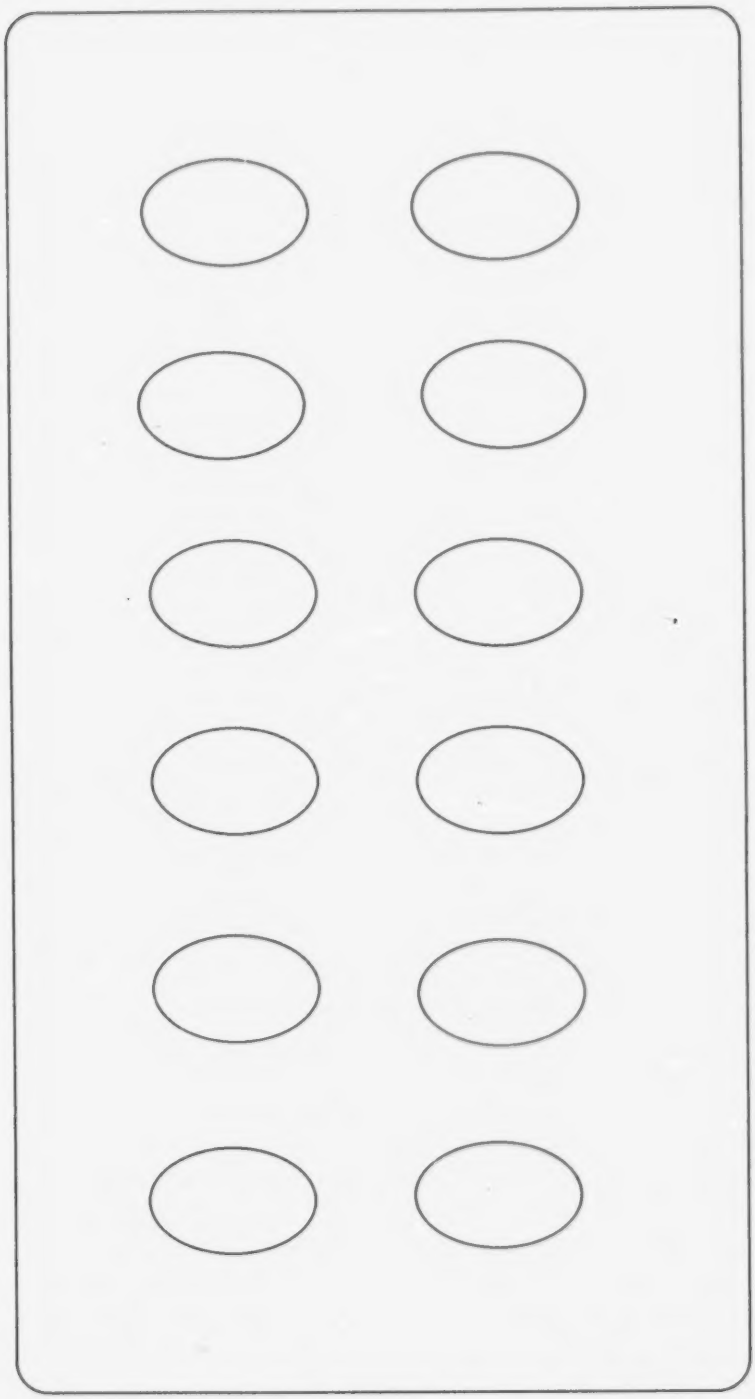
Handout 17-1c
AYO board



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Part 5
Conclusion

An opportunity for students to share and demonstrate what they have learned.

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18. Conclusion and Evaluation

Overview:

Students will present, reflect on and evaluate projects that they have developed during the unit. They will reflect back on what they have learned during the unit.

Objectives:

1. To assess what students have learned during the unit.
2. To encourage students to reflect on what and how they have learned.
3. To help students think critically about their learning and experience.

Materials:

Student folders with all of the work they have done during the unit, particularly the "Guesswork" or mind map assignment from Lesson 2.
Handout 18-1

Assessment Activities:

1. Have students look back to their "Guesswork" assignment in Lesson 2 and compare it with their research paper or project on their ethnic group. Have them write a paper telling what they have learned about their ethnic group and how they learned it. Or have them put the information from the "Guesswork" assignment on a chart showing which guesses were correct, which were wrong and which were partly right.

2. If students have written plays or done other projects, have them present them to the class. For a major performance, give students two presentation opportunities. Let them give their first performance to their group, and have group members critique it. Then give them an opportunity to practice before presenting to
the whole class. Encourage students to critique both the accuracy of the information presented in the performance and the skill and technique of the performance. You can use the critique sheet for both written and oral performances.

3. Discuss with students the advantages and disadvantages of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Africa. What did they gain that they would not have learned from separate study in each class?

Were there any problems? Did they have trouble making connections between classes?

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Handout 18-1
Critique Sheet

Rate each part of the performance on the following three-point scale. Write a sentence under each rating telling why you rated it that way.

1 - excellent
2 - minor problems but generally good
3 - serious problems.
0 - this question is not appropriate for this project

Accuracy of information about Africa

1. Is it accurate historically? Does everything fit the time period it is supposed to take place in?

2. Is it accurate geographically? Does everything fit the place it is supposed to take place in?

3. Is it accurate ethnically? Does everything fit the ethnic group being described?

4. It is accurate culturally? Do people behave by the proper rules for the culture being described?

Quality of performance

1. Is it interesting?

2. Is it well-done, neat, well-presented and well-organized?

3. Does it show creativity and skill?

How could this performance be improved?

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Appendix

Slides

1. Termite mound on the savannah in Cote d'Ivoire. Termites play an important role in the ecology of the savannah. Notice the flat land with scattered trees. (Photo by Alice Ayers)

2. Secondary forest region in Sierra Leone. The iron oxide in the soil has turned the unpaved road red. This area is rich in iron, diamonds and gold. (Photo by Rich Corby)

3. Palm trees and rice fields dot the landscape in Sierra Leone. These crops are grown where forests have been cut down. Much of the land is rolling hills and mountains. The highest mountain is Mt. Bintimani, 6,390 feet high. (Photo by Rich Corby)

4. Fishermen are hauling a boat onto a shore near Freetown. Fresh and dried fish make up an important part of the diet of many Africans. The fish is usually cooked in a sauce of vegetables, spices and onions and served over rice. Along the Gulf of Guinea much of the coast is thick mangrove swamps instead of sandy beach. (Photo by Alice Ayres)

5. The Niger River at Mopti, Mali. The river provides irrigation and transportation in this desert area. (Photo by Alice Ayers)

6. Adobe houses in Mopti, Mali. Notice the limited vegetation in this desert area. The limited rainfall makes it possible to construct houses of adobe or sun-dried brick which would not last as long in a wetter climate. (Photo by Alice Ayres)

7. Rural houses in Sierra Leone. Note both round and square houses. Also note the decorations on the round house. (Photo by Rich Corby)

8. A woman spins cotton in a compound in a village in Cote d'Ivoire. In rural villages spinning and weaving are still done by hand, adding value to the cloth. In urban areas traditional techniques have been replaced with factories. This compound represents a typical housing pattern in rural Africa. A group of small buildings are built around a central courtyard. Buildings are made with local materials. The frame of the building is usually made with sticks. The walls are covered with mud or adobe bricks and topped with a thatched roof. Typically an extended family will live together in a compound with an individual house for each adult. There are also granaries and covered areas for cooking. Most of the daily activities and socializing take place in the courtyard. (Photo by Helen Phillips)

9. Modern hotel in Mopti, Mali. Improved irrigation methods allow lush gardens to survive on the hotel grounds. Modern building materials and des igns have replaced traditional architecture.

10. A mosque in Kenema, Sierra Leone. Five times a day prayers are called from one of the towers, or minarets. Before entering the mosque shoes must be removed.

11. A street in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Notice the yellow pickup truck on the left. These pickups have benches around three sides and are a form transportation in the city.

12. An elementary school student walks home on a hill overlooking Freetown, Sierra Leone.

13. Students at a rural elementary school. Most African schools require some type of uniform dress.

14. Children in a traditional Moslem school study verses from the Qur'an, Islam's holy book.

15. Tireli musicians prepare for the Dama dance in Mali. The big drum is called "Boyna." The clalbash drum is "barba." (Photo by Alice Ayres)

16. Ibo masks used in a masquerade dance. Note the expressions, hair and face markings.

17. Dogon maquerade dancers on stilts.

18. Masquerade dancer with animal masque. The main costume is made of raffia. Note the interaction between the masquerade dancer and the other dancer.

19. Mask on Kente cloth.

20. Child with homemade toy in savannah area.

Recommened Resources

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Folkways Music Catalogue, 955 L'Enfant, Smithsonian Plaza, 2600, Washington, DC 20560

Heinemann, 361 Hanover St., Portsmouth, NH 03801-3959. (Ask for Africa Writers' Series catalogue)

The Glenhurst Collection: A Catalogue of Women's History and Culture, Central Community Center, 6300 Walker St., St. Louis Park, MN 55416.

Journal Films, 1560 Sherman Avenue, Suite 100, Evanston, IL 60201.

Library of African Cinema, California Newsreel, 149 Ninth St., Suite 420, San Francisco, CA 94103.

Red Sea Press, Inc. Publishers and Distributers of Third World Books, 15 Industrial Court, Trenton, NJ 08638.

Smithsonian Resource Guide for Teachers, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Smithsonian Institution, Arts and Industries Building, Room 1163, MRC 402, Washington, DC 20560.

Stanford Program on International and Cross-cultural Education (SPICE), Littlefield Center, Room 14, 300 Lausen St., Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-5013, Phone 415-723-1114.

World Music Press, P.O. Box 2565, Danbury, CT 06813-2565.

World Wise Schools, U.S. Peace Corps, 1990 K St., N.W. Washington, DC 20526. Phone 202-606-3294. (Provides ongoing contact with a Peace Corps member in the country and has videos on many countries.)